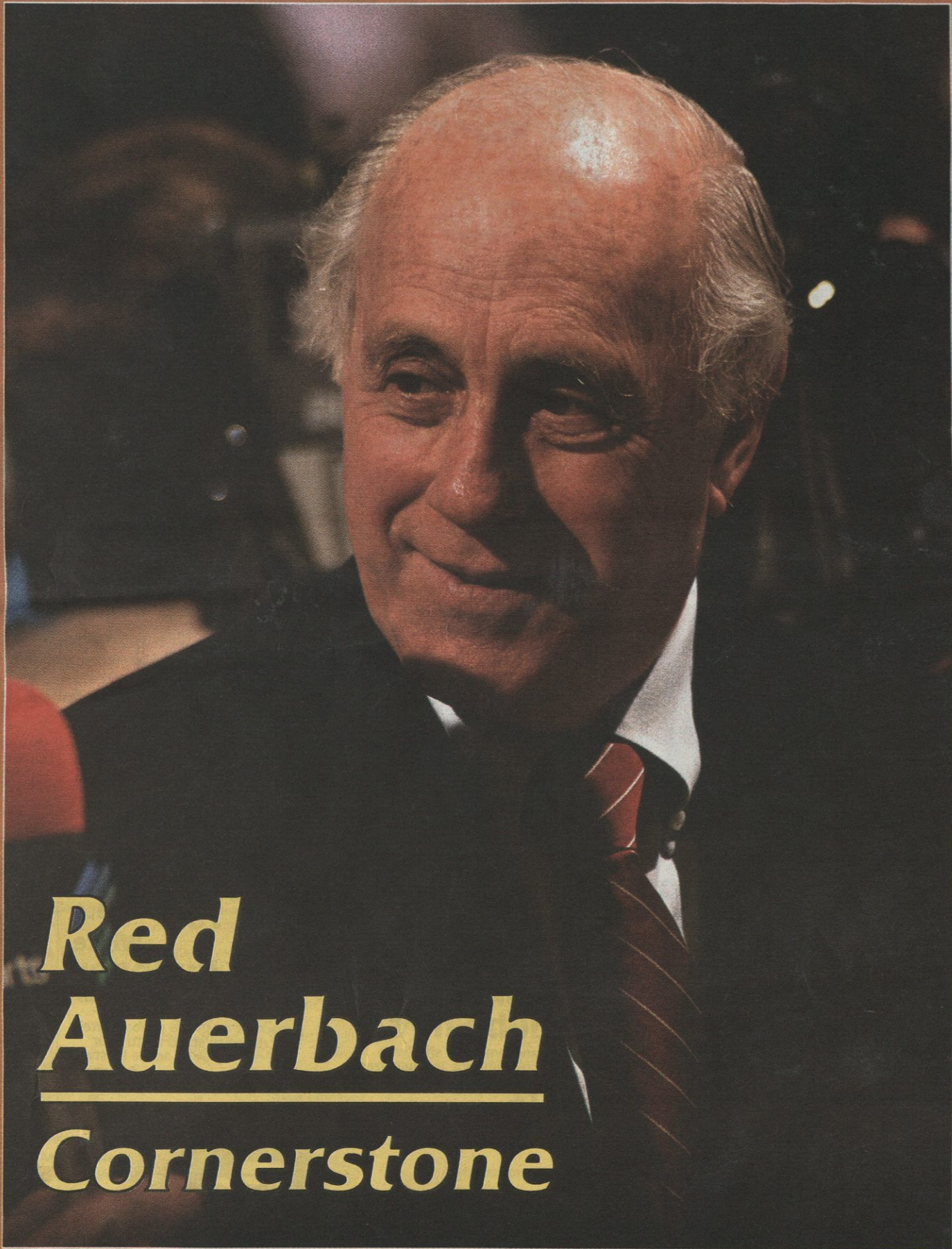


BOSTON CELTICS PRIDE



Volume 3, Issue 15
June 7, 1988
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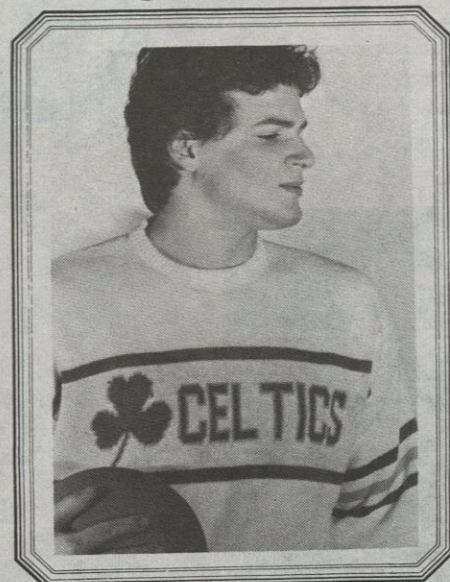
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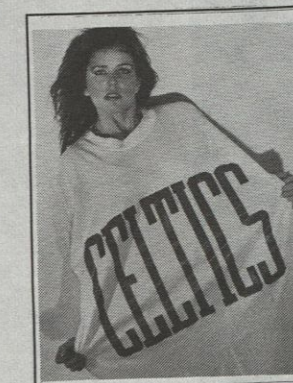
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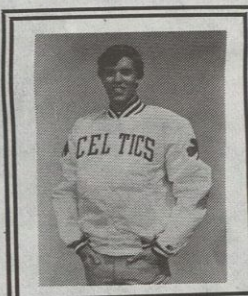
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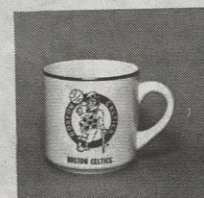
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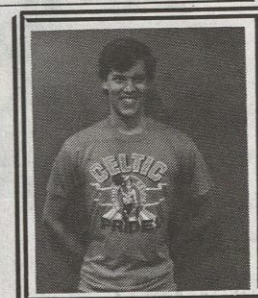
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BOSTON CELTICS PRIDE

A Message From Red Auerbach to Celtics Fans



K.C. Jones: Record Speaks for Itself

By Red Auerbach

We have been deeply appreciative and genuinely respectful of the job K.C. Jones has done in his five years as head coach of the Boston Celtics. This is a man who has had the respect of his players from the first day he walked out on the practice floor. Because of what he had accomplished with us as a player and as an assistant coach, the players understood his qualifications. He is a great coach on the bench, able to size up situations with the best in the game.

I think K.C. Jones' record speaks for itself. In his four seasons leading up to this year's playoffs, he won two championships and made it to The Finals in the two other years. This record, even when his team was badly injured. Coaching takes a tremendous toll on a man.

I left coaching when I was 48 years old because of personal and professional demands. I suspect K.C. Jones might be experiencing some of these feelings. He has a young family and he wants to take some time with them.

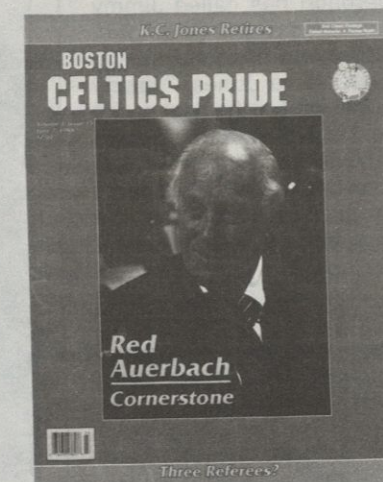
One of the genuine and admirable qualities about K.C. Jones is his loyalty to the team and to his assistant, Jimmy Rodgers. It never slipped. K.C. wants to see Jimmy Rodgers have an opportunity to coach the Celtics while we are still a great ballclub. This speaks to the class of K.C. and it tells a lot of why he's a success.

I think K.C. Jones is happy with his choice and that makes us satisfied as an organization. We pride ourselves on our ability to stay strong as an organization and as a team. K.C. Jones brought great success to the team as head coach, and we look forward to his continuing contributions to us in his new role in the front office.

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 15
NUMBER 55
JUNE 7, 1988

Cover . . .

The incredible career of Red Auerbach and his wealth of experience have earned him recognition around the league and around the nation. His spirit and brilliance are the cornerstone of the Celtics organization. Cover photography by Steve Lipofsky.



Features . . .

4 . . . K.C. Jones Retires

In a move surprising to many Celtics observers, K.C. Jones has decided to retire from coaching and move into the front office.

8 . . . The Cornerstone

Red Auerbach spared some time during this busy playoff season to comment on the Celtics, his ideas on the league and the future of the NBA.

10 . . . Next Year's Coach

Jimmy Rodgers will succeed K.C. as head coach of the Celtics next year. His appointment to this position is richly deserved and the future of the Celtics court performance is in good hands.

23 . . . Three Referees?

Next year will also mark the advent of three referees working each NBA game. Writer Bob Schron looks at the implications of this decision with the help of Hue Hollins, Bob Cousy and Dirk Minniefield.

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JUNE 7, 1988

K.C. Jones to Move into Front Office Five Great Seasons

By Bob Schron

In a move that was unexpected at this time, Celtics coach K.C. Jones announced his decision to leave coaching. Jones, who coached eight seasons (through this year), won seven division and/or conference championships during that time with the Washington Bullets (three seasons) and the Celtics (five). K.C. coached the Celtics to NBA championships in 1984 and 1986.

According to a statement published in *The Boston Globe*, May 4, Celtics President Red Auerbach has called Jimmy Rodgers, the team's present Director of Player Personnel and assistant coach, the "heir apparent" to Jones. "Jimmy has done a great job for the past seven or eight years. He's earned the job and we're glad to have him." Jones will become Director of Basketball Operations.

The K.C. Jones coaching era of the Celtics has been replete with success, significantly because of Jones, a sharp, decisive bench coach who learned the technique from his mentor, Auerbach, for whom he played for eight seasons as a player. After taking over the head coaching reins from Bill Fitch in 1983, Jones infused new life into the term "player's coach." Jones allowed star players such as Larry Bird, Dennis Johnson, Kevin McHale, Robert Parish and Danny Ainge to play the game as they desired, within a general framework. Jones' career record, 507-231 through the opening round of this season's playoffs, speaks for itself.

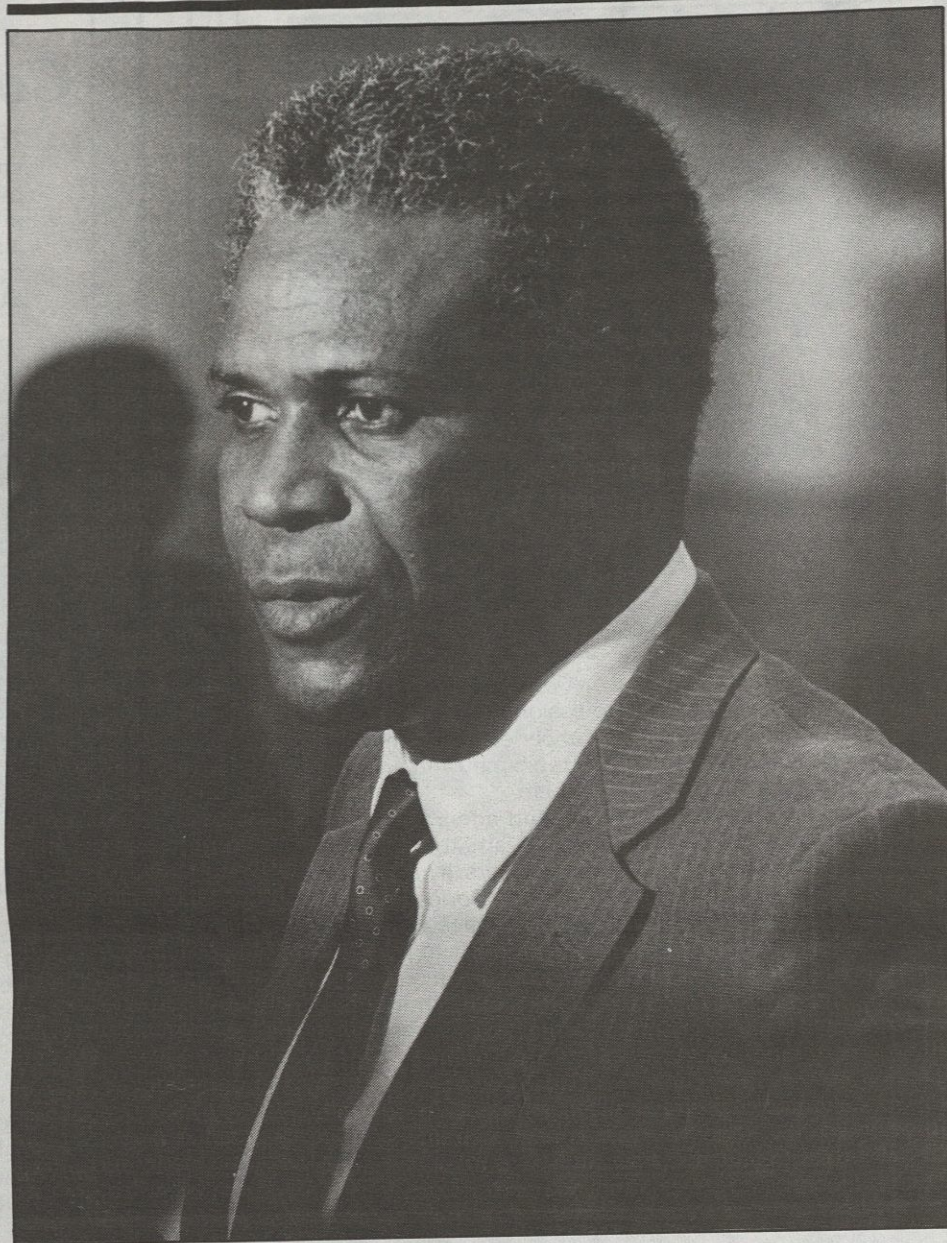
K.C. informed Auerbach and General Manager Jan Volk of his decision in a meeting on April 19th. The team was told in a pre-practice meeting May 3rd. "I just thought this was the right time to make a move," Jones told *Celtics Pride* that day. "I wanted to wait, but circumstances dictated that we announce it now."

"I think the players were shocked," Jones said in a published report. "Pleased and shocked. They were pleased because it was of my own volition."

"These five years with the Celtics have been fantastic. It's been great to have this hayride with these players."

"What else can I do? I've accomplished all of what I set out to do, two championships and making The Finals the other two seasons. If I were ambitious, I'd coach until I was 75, but that wouldn't be me. This gives me a chance to spend more time with my family (wife Ellen and son Christopher, 5). And now Jimmy Rodgers won't have to wait any longer."

The ascendancy of K.C. Jones to the summit of the coaching profession included the stint with the Washington Bullets, whom he took to The Finals in 1975. After the Bullets were swept, in an unusual series (the Bullets were forced to cede its home court advantage because of an arena conflict), Jones was released the following season. "But that was because K.C. was dealing with players who had absolutely no idea of how to play the game," commented *USA Today's* David Dupree, who covered the Bullets for *The Washington Post* that season. "Wes Unseld and Phil Chenier understood what K.C. was trying to get across, but few others did. You see, K.C. depended — and still does — on professionalism from his players. He'll tell you



K.C. Jones: Great Accomplishments

something and he'll depend on your ability to get it done. That Bullets team couldn't do it. This (era 1983-88) Celtics team can."

Jones was an assistant coach to Satch Sanders, Dave Cowens and Bill Fitch in Boston, from 1978-83. Interestingly, his cherished goal of once again coaching had seemed to permanently elude him; he feuded with Fitch and because of the undeniably political nature of the business, he had resigned himself to being a full-time assistant. "If it weren't for Red Auerbach," Jones told a Boston television station last week. "I wouldn't be standing here at all." When Fitch resigned, Auerbach patiently analyzed the situation and hired Jones after the Celtics were swept by the Milwaukee Bucks in

Upcoming NBA Events

NBA Draft Lottery: Saturday, May 21
Expansion Draft Coin Flip: Monday, June 13

Expansion Draft: Friday, June 17* or Monday, June 20 or Thursday, June 23

NBA Draft: Tuesday, June 28

*June 17 if NBA Finals end June 12 or June 14; June 20 if NBA Finals end June 16; June 23 if NBA Finals end June 19 or June 21.

the semi-final round of the Eastern Conference playoffs in '83.

Jones had some real reservations and strong opinions about apparently being left out of the coaching derby, but refused to allow these feelings to be aired publicly. Until he received his position. At that point, especially last year, when major league baseball's Al Campanis made statements questioning the abilities of minorities in managerial positions, Jones was a willing spokesman in support of black head coaches in basketball. "There's no question that K.C. was an ideal model for us," commented current Player Personnel Director of the Charlotte Hornets, Gene Littles. "K.C. has it all — class, knowledge of the game and the ability to handle people."

This theme was repeated by current Celtics stars. Larry Bird told *The Globe*, "The thing I'll remember most is how he treated us like men. He's one of the nicest people I've ever met. He treated us all the same. He never lets his ego get in the way of players doing their jobs. He lets everybody play the style of ball they want, and players always have a lot of input." Danny Ainge responded, "I think everybody has so much respect for K.C. We all care about him. I know he didn't do it to motivate us (to win the playoffs this year). I'm sure he didn't want the story to break. But I'm sure he didn't do it for motivation. It's just something he feels strongly about."

"At the time K.C. first told me, I was surprised," Volk told *The Boston Herald*. "But when I look back on when K.C. stepped in, he had some pretty solid goals for himself and the team. And those goals were ones he could accomplish in a relatively short period of time. He wasn't planning to make this a prolonged tenure. From that standpoint, I don't think it could really be called a shock."

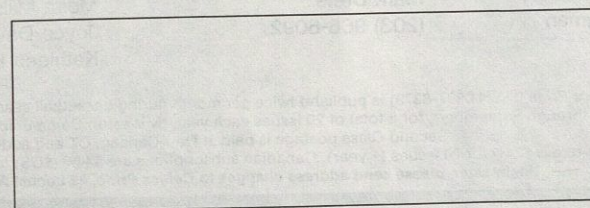
Ironically, the announcement by Jones occurred on the same day that Wes Unseld was inducted into The Naismith Hall of Fame, where Jones will undoubtedly join his former player, now the Bullets' head coach.

Attention Celtics Pride Subscribers

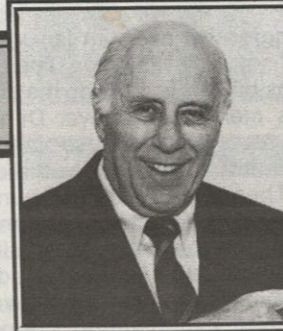
Due to an increase in both printing prices and postage rates, the annual subscription rate to *Boston Celtics Pride* will rise to \$30.00, effective July 15, 1988. (Newsstand rates will rise to \$3.00 per issue.) Subscribers currently on our mailing list who would like to add another year to their existing subscriptions at the current \$24.00 rate are welcome to do so, by attaching their mailing label (found on the front cover) to the coupon below and returning to us postmarked no later than **July 15, 1988**. Checks and money orders are to be made out to *Celtics Pride* and enclosed with this coupon in the amount of \$24.00.

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By Red Auerbach

EDITORS NOTE: "Ask Red Auerbach" is a regular feature of *Celtics Pride*. If you have a question for Red, please send it to *Celtics Pride*, 49 Locust Avenue, New Canaan, Connecticut 06840. Red will answer as many as possible in each issue.

QUESTION: Different magazines and newspapers have said different things about Spud Webb. I've seen him listed as being 5-8, 5-5½ and 5-7. What is Spud Webb's true height?
Elizabeth Gouveia, Taunton, Mass.

RED'S ANSWER: The Atlanta Hawks 1986-87 Media Guide lists Anthony (did you know that was his first name?) Webb as being 5-7 and 135 pounds. But I think you're missing a point even asking the question. The fact is that no matter how tall this guy is, he can really play basketball. He has the ability, with his incredible speed, to change the pace of a game when he comes in. In an era when the big emphasis is on big and tall players, Spud Webb has proven that speed is another asset to be considered. And with his ballhandling skills and his amazing jumping ability, he has made himself into a very valuable member of a very good team. Now I think that other NBA teams will start looking for physical attributes beyond just height for potential draft choices.

QUESTION: What is the rule that limits player substitutions in the NBA? Many times a player will be trying to enter the game and the official will not allow him in.
Dan Bernbaum, Austin, Texas

RED'S ANSWER: You can substitute as many people in the pros as you want, except after a 20-second time out. After a 20-second time out, you're only allowed one substitution. When an official won't allow a player into the game who has been waiting to do so, it's probably because that player has not yet checked in with the official scorer on the sidelines. A few years ago, the league painted a white box in the sideline in each arena at halfcourt; every player who wants to check into a game should be waiting in that box before the horn blows, and then he should wait until the official recognizes him and motions him into the game.

QUESTION: Several teams seem to have a "problem" player, one who misses practices or gets in trouble off the court. I am impressed by the Celtics strong sense of family and high moral values. Do you take the background of prospective new players into consideration as well as their playing ability and talent?
Carol Chauvin, Hyde Park, Vt.

RED'S ANSWER: To some extent, we absolutely take character and personality under consideration when we view a basketball player as a member of the Boston Celtics, both when we are thinking of drafting him and when we are making a trade. Obviously, you don't want any trouble-makers on your team. But to go too far with that line of thinking would be letting the inmates run the asylum, in my opinion. If a guy has a long-standing reputation as a trouble-maker and I'm convinced that he can't or won't change, then we won't even consider him. On the other hand, lots of times those vague hints about a player's personality being a problem is just a reflection of a conflict between him and a particular coach or player, and not of his overall character. When a new player comes to the Celtics, I expect him to immediately conform to the very high standards we set. I will never judge a guy just on the basis of what some writer says about him; that opinion could be a personal

ASK RED

thing. We have a history of having obtained players through trades whose character had been questioned and then having those guys prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the questions were false ones. On our present team, Dennis Johnson is a prime example of that. When we got him from Phoenix in 1983, his adaptability to our system and standards was doubted; it goes without saying that he has proven himself both as a player and as a person to be a genuine Boston Celtic. He has convinced even the most biased of observers of his class, and he has helped us to two championships.

Incidentally, this present group of players constitute perhaps the finest group of people we've had on the team. Most are married and family men, and all of them demonstrate the sort of moral values that I would hope we can project to kids.

QUESTION: If a basket is made at the same time an illegal defense is called, does the basket count or the ball go outside?
Dick McClintock, Burlington, Vt.

RED'S ANSWER: No need to consult my rule book on this one, since it has happened at least a few times that I can remember. If a field goal attempt is simultaneous with a whistle for an illegal defense violation and the shot goes in, the basket counts and the violation is nullified. After that, obviously, the other team brings the ball inbounds as with any other basket.

QUESTION: How are player's numbers selected for retirement? Is Tommy Heinsohn's number retired?
Dick McClintock, Burlington, Vt.

RED'S ANSWER: Of course, Tommy Heinsohn's number is retired. His number 15 hangs from the rafters of the Garden along with the numbers of 12 other players. Also displayed on those same banners is one name — "Loscy" for Jim Loscutt — whose number (18) was being worn by, and later retired in honor of, Dave Cowens. The numbers 1 and 2 are also on those banners. Number 1 was retired in honor of Walter Brown, our first owner and the founder of the team. Number 2 was retired in honor of a former redheaded coach and general manager of the team whose name eludes me right now. There is no specific formula for qualifying to have your number retired; it's more a sense of the extent of an individual's contribution to our success. We have so many numbers retired because we've been fortunate enough to have achieved so much.

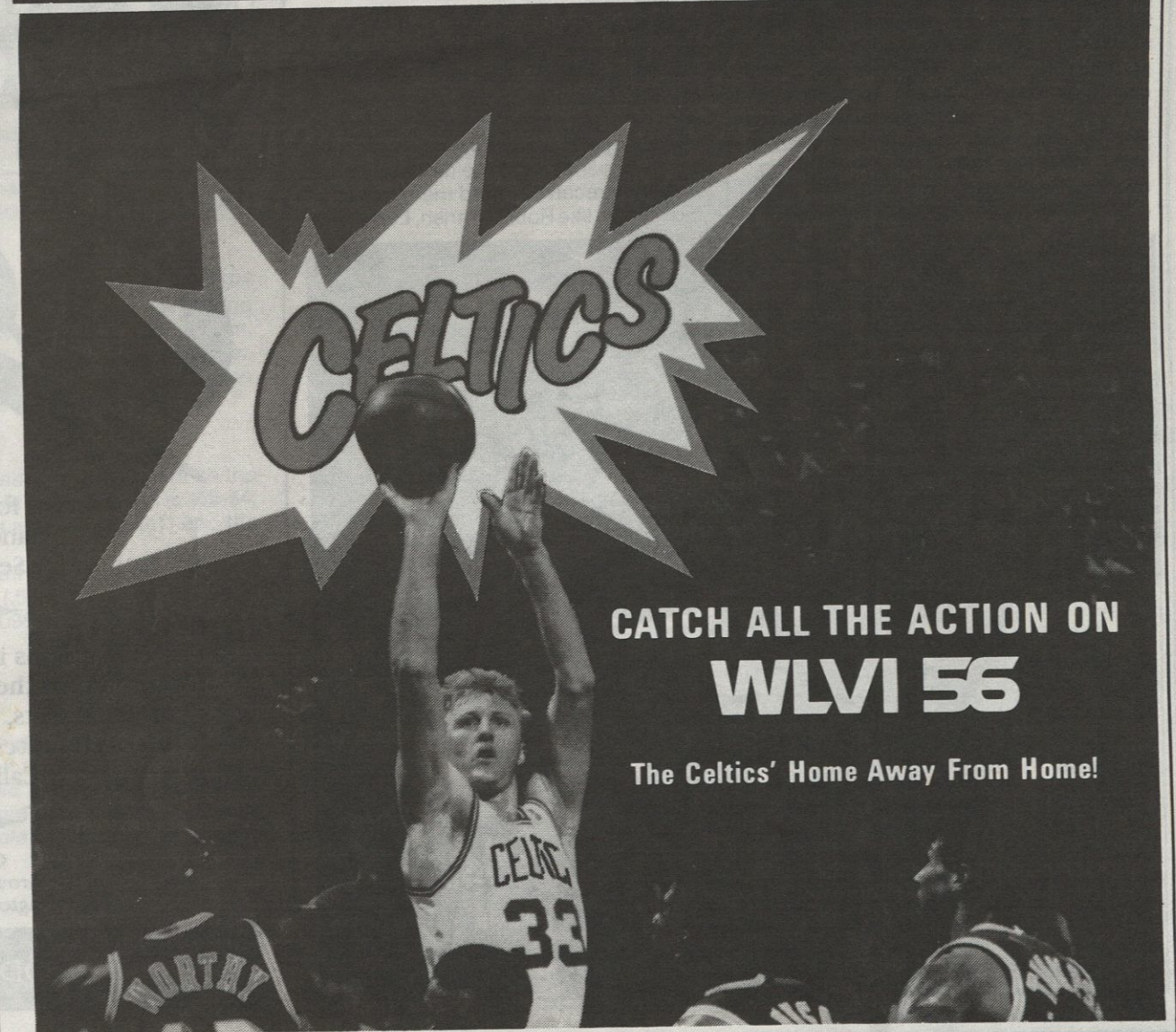
RETIRED CELTICS' NUMBERS

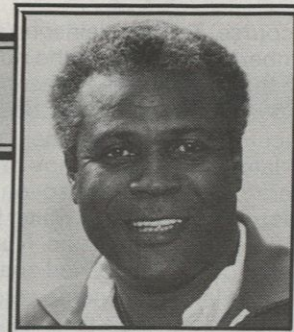
1 — Walter Brown	18 — Dave Cowens
2 — "Red" Auerbach	Jim Loscutt*
6 — Bill Russell	19 — Don Nelson
10 — Jo Jo White	21 — Bill Sharman
14 — Bob Cousy	22 — Ed Macauley
15 — Tom Heinsohn	23 — Frank Ramsey
16 — Tom (Satch) Sanders	25 — K.C. Jones

*Loscutt's jersey was retired, but number 18 was kept active for Dave Cowens.

QUESTION: Do the hand signals your guards use tip off the other teams to what your offense is going to do?
Doug Kirkpatrick, Boston, Ma.

RED'S ANSWER: Well, they shouldn't. If our coaches felt that other teams were tuned into the plays they're calling, they can simply change the signals. Also, every play has a number of options that work off of it; it's not like a football play where once you call and begin a play, you run it the same each time, no matter what the other team does. In any event, if you execute a play right, there's no way it can be stopped.





COACH'S CORNER

By K.C. Jones

Defense

I was asked after the second playoff game of the post-season, a 128-102 win over the Knicks, if Dennis Johnson reminded me of the way I used to play when I was with the Celtics. I had to laugh a little at that; Dennis has more than I ever had as a player. Dennis Johnson has the ability to pick up a team all by himself — on offense and on defense. It's something that is derived from his great determination as a player. It's specifically prevalent at playoff time. There's a certain look in his eye. When he is prepared to play, we, as a team, are ready to go (he's our leader). When I see that look and I sense his determination, I just say "Praise the Lord." Dennis is the igniter of our team defense — he and Danny Ainge and Jim Paxson provide the perimeter boundary against any opponent we'll have to take on from here on in.

We defeated the New York Knicks early in the playoffs, shrugging off some momentary lapses to continue our sharp play of recent weeks. In Game One of that series, a tense game through the first three quarters, I had to call timeout at one point and just reinforce the memory of the way we had regrouped late in the season through defense. We were just not getting back well enough in this game. When we tightened up, everything clicked. Larry Bird and Kevin McHale got it going inside for 29 points each and

we had an important advantage in the series.

In the playoffs, you do what is necessary to win. We would like to run more, but if the guys on the floor are establishing a set-up game, then that's the way you have to try to win. Easy points off the break can present themselves, off excellent defense. Whether we walk it up or run, I strongly feel that we will score enough to win if we are playing strong fundamental defense. It's a foundation we've built upon here in Boston since the days of Red Auerbach. Some of the particulars in that theory have changed, but the central belief has not. Strong defense means success at this time of the year.

Look at the teams in the post-season. We went up against the Knicks, who led the league in forcing turnovers and who play a strong pressing defensive game under Rick Pitino. In another closely-contested bracket in the East, Chicago and Cleveland fought it out; the Bulls led the league in team defense this season and improved their record by ten wins this season over last. In the West, teams like Utah (Mark Eaton and Karl Malone) and Houston (Akeem Olajuwon, Joe Barry Carroll and Cedric Maxwell) are threatening because they have an intimidating defensive approach. The Lakers are the favorite in the West because they have a solid defensive approach based on quickness. And talent, led by Michael Cooper.

We have made a strong commitment on the defensive end, and this has given us a much stronger sense of confidence in ourselves. I spoke above about the defensive efforts of Dennis, Danny and Paxson; their hustle on the defensive end is dependent on the defensive support they receive behind them from our big players like Robert Parish, Larry Bird

and Kevin McHale. A writer asked me about Kevin's defense this year; I think Kevin has played great defense this season. We have generally played more straight-up, basic man-to-man this season with selective double-teaming. This changes, of course, according to the opponent. Against players like Charles Barkley, Dominique Wilkins, Adrian Dantley, Michael Jordan or James Worthy, you will want to double-team them as soon as possible. The mission there: make them give up the ball. Players such as these exemplify a real problem for defenses in the NBA. Players on offense are unstoppable.

But team defense can win. Every player in our defensive scheme is important, but let's briefly discuss the role of Ainge and Paxson and how they play a role in the entire scheme. Danny is very quick

and aggressive and Jim is very intelligent, if not as fast as Ainge. Their central responsibility is to zone on the offensive threats mentioned above. Danny will keep an eye out when those players have the ball and move over for the double-team. Then when the ball is swung back over, he needs to get back to a man one man closer to the ball. Paxson will do the same thing; it's best for the whole defense if he is able to return to his own man. However, if either Ainge or Paxson is unable to recover, the whole defense must adjust, picking up a man, or covering an area. It requires concentration and commitment. It requires dedication and, most of all, physical hustle.

I firmly believe as we move farther ahead in the playoffs against either Atlanta or Milwaukee in the next round, that defense will win it for us, if we are to win. It's more fun to score points, so most players and teams will go for it on the offensive end. If we can continue to work together and make the necessary sacrifices on the defensive end, then I believe we can be a major factor as the playoffs progress.

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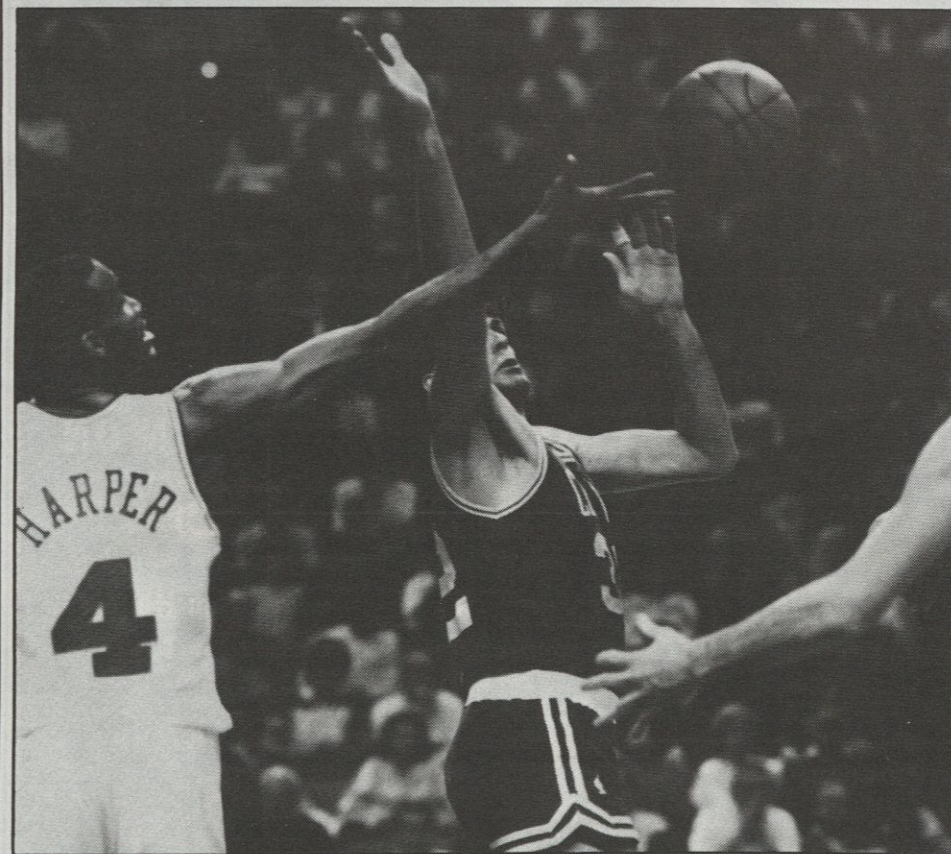
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Kevin McHale: Great Defense

NOTES AND QUOTES

By Jim Rucidlo

Celtics fans are everywhere: an average of 18,631 fans came out to see each of the Celtics' away games during the 1987-88 season, making them one of the top-drawing road teams in the NBA. Only seven of the 41 games played on the road weren't sellouts. When the Celtics and Pistons locked horns at the Pontiac Silverdome on January 29, the largest crowd in NBA history (61,983) witnessed the event.

□ □ □

The Celtics were most productive in the first-quarter this season, averaging 29.6 points, while holding their opponents to an average of 26.9. Only in the second-quarter was Boston outscored by its foes.

For only the fourth time in NBA history, the top two field-goal percentage shooters were on the same team. Kevin McHale (.606) led the league and Robert Parish (.569) finished second.

□ □ □

Robert Parish is the only member of the starting five who did not get hit with a technical foul this season, while Kevin McHale got nailed for six Ts to lead the team. The Chief's angelic mark could be jeopardized, however, if the Celtics meet the Detroit Pistons and Bill Laimbeer in the Eastern Conference Finals.

□ □ □

Oh, no! It's a Philly game: on November 20, the Celtics trailed the Sixers by 41 points, 108-69, in a game they eventually lost 116-85, marking their biggest deficit and worst loss of the season, respectively.

A month later the two teams met for a rematch in Boston and the Celtics notched their largest lead of the season, 49 points (116-67), on their way to a 37-point victory. But it didn't end there. On March 25, Philadelphia returned to the Garden and fell behind by 30 points, 75-45. From there on, the Celtics were outscored 52-18, losing the game 97-93, making it the biggest lead lost this season.

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Although the Celtics led the Eastern Conference this season with a winning percentage of .695, the ball just didn't bounce their way when Jess Thompson or Ed Middleton was officiating the games. When either of the two referees were on the court, the Celtics groveled to a .400 record.

On the other hand, good guys can be found wearing the black-and-white striped uniform. With Wally Rooney manning one of the whistles the Celtics are 6-0, Jack Nies 5-0, and Perry Durham 5-0. Note these figures don't take into consideration game location or opponent, but it would be wise to send Christmas cards anyway.

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Only two coaches in NBA history have recorded more than K.C. Jones' 70 playoff victories. Red Auerbach tops the list with 98 wins and is followed by Pat Riley with 72.

□ □ □

Playoff coaching records of possible Celtics opponents: Pat Riley 72-29 (.713); Bill Fitch, 53-45 (.541); Lenny Wilkens, 37-32 (.536); John MacLeod, 37-44 (.457); Doug Moe, 28-38 (.424); Chuck Daly, 18-15 (.545); Del Harris, 15-16 (.484); Frank Layden, 12-18 (.400); Mike Fratello, 10-13 (.435); Bernie Bickerstaff, 7-7 (.500); Mike Schuler, 1-3 (.250); Doug Collins, 0-3 (.000). The 1988 NBA Playoffs mark the first post-season appearances for Rick Pitino, Wes Unseld, and Bob Weiss as head coaches.

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Entering the 1988 Playoffs, the Celtics hold a slim lead over the Lakers as the franchise with the best playoff home and away records. At home Boston is 165-54, while Los Angeles is 164-54 and on the road the Celtics are 83-105 (.441) and the Lakers are 86-113 (.432).

Historically, the franchises with the worst home playoff mark qualifying for the 1988 NBA Playoffs are San Antonio (.517) and Chicago (.576). Likewise, the worst playoff road teams are Cleveland, .091 (1-10), Chicago, .098 (4-37), and Dallas, .143 (2-12).

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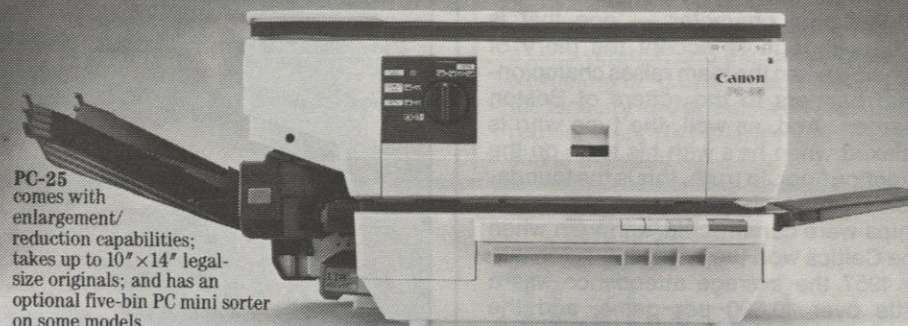
Larry Bird is the sixth-leading scorer in NBA playoff history, Dennis Johnson is ninth, Kevin McHale is 15th, and Robert Parish is 16th. If the Celtics engage in at least 20 playoff games this year and these players hold to their regular season average, Bird should move into the third all-time slot right behind Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Jerry West, and John Havlicek, Johnson should advance to the eighth position, McHale the 12th, and Parish the 13th.

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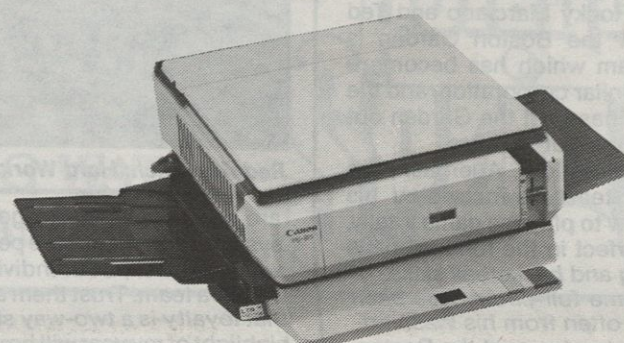
In each of their eight NBA seasons, Larry Bird and Magic Johnson have appeared in the playoffs. Bird's stat line: 128 games, 3142 points, 24.5 ppg, 817 assists, and 1397 rebounds. Johnson, 120 games, 2264 points, 18.9 ppg, 1497 assists, and 1007 rebounds.

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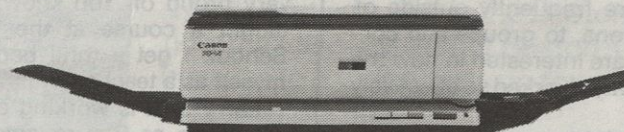
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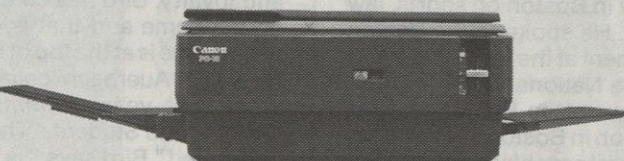
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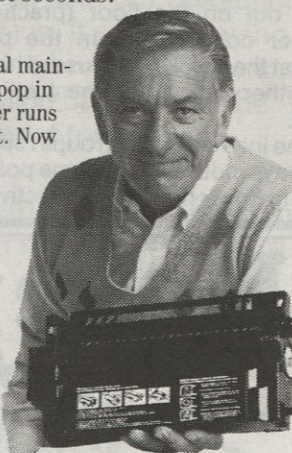
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Red Auerbach: Vitality And Experience Infuses Celtics Organization

The Cornerstone

By Bob Schron

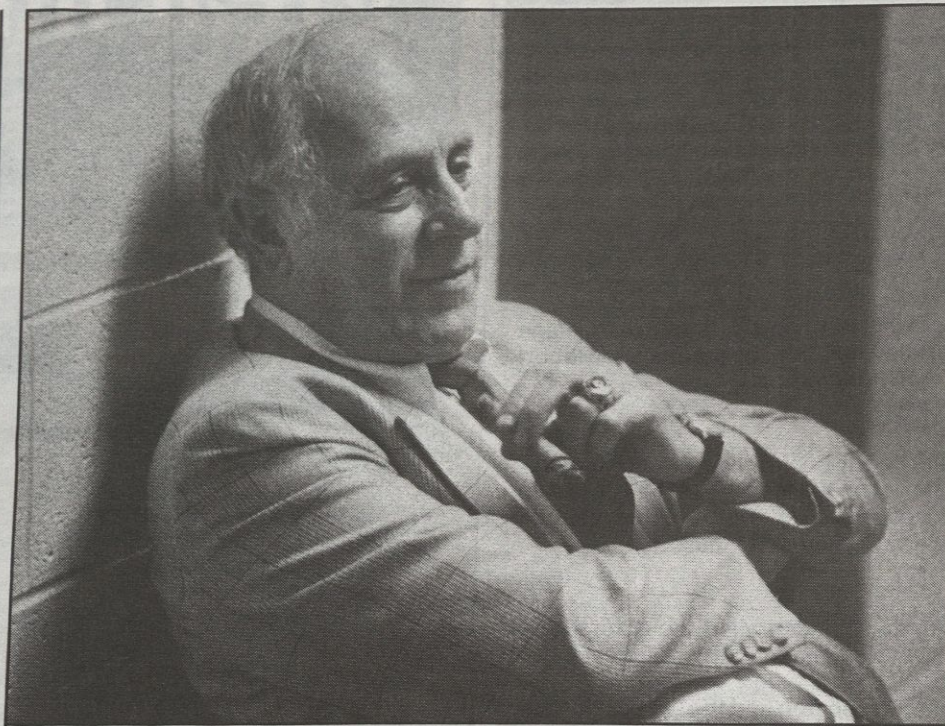
This is the man K.C. Jones calls "an Encyclopedia of Basketball." Red Auerbach, still active and vibrant at seventy, is watching his Celtics team work out at Hellenic college and he is at home. For Auerbach, the practice floor is really where championships are won. Red has a multi-dimensional character — one that is proud enough to accept the glory of winning when the team raises championship banners to the rafters of Boston Garden. And, as well, the type who is relaxed when he's with his team on the practice floor. In truth, this is the foundation from which the sixteen championships were constructed, although when the Celtics won their first championship in 1957 the average attendance was a little over 10,000 per game, and the Boston sporting populace was more interested in Rocky Marciano and Ted Williams. Now the Boston Garden is home to a team which has become a multi-million dollar corporation, and the Bird Era team has sold the Garden out for over 365 consecutive dates.

On the practice floor, Auerbach, the post-doctoral teacher, instructed his charges on how to play the game totally, to be letter-perfect in the fundamentals of conditioning and basketball skills.

Now he's come full circle. Auerbach commutes less often from his Washington, D.C., home to games at the Boston Garden. Now he carries the message of the Celtics more frequently outside of the sporting arena, to groups and corporations who are interested in how the Celtics have always worked so effectively as a team.

In the past eight months, Auerbach has spoken to the Pepsi Corporation, and he has addressed a colloquium at Brandeis University in Boston on sports, law and the media. He spoke to the Boston Police Department at the Endicott House in Dedham, the National Lumber Company at the Marriott in Boston and the World Trade Club in Boston. He has been involved in several coaching clinics, including one in Naples, Florida. Auerbach, while keeping one eye firmly fixed on the team out on the floor (practicing for further competition in the playoffs, against the Knicks), discussed his season and other topics of interest with *Celtics Pride*.

"The interest of the groups I speak with is always motivation at some point. They want to know how we're effective. There



Red Auerbach: Hard Work and Loyalty

are some basic messages: establish a system. Work hard. Hire people you think will work well, both individually and as part of a team. Trust them and remember that loyalty is a two-way street. Another highlight of my year will be when I receive two degrees. Those are something I'm very proud of. You know, for a time I taught a course at the Harvard Law School. I get a thrill because I fancy myself as a teacher."

Larry Bird is working out in front of Auerbach as Red reflects. Bird — the consummate professional, a tribute to the Celtics' belief in hard work, discipline and loyalty. Bird has continued to work on his game and that is extraordinary, because he is at the top of his profession. Bird and Auerbach collaborated on a video last year, *Winning Basketball*, Teacher and Student. "The ideal quality about Red," Bird says, "is that he's been through every era of the game and when he tells you something, it's directly related to something he's done. He's watched the game change and he's changed it. The environment of the Boston Celtics is quality, and that's because of Red. It wouldn't be the same without him."

Auerbach is asked about the recent agreement between the Players Association and the NBA management. "I didn't

see anything of real consequence in terms of a dramatic change. You see, you have to adjust with the times. We made some minor adjustments regarding free agency and the minimum salary and such. But the major achievement, I think, is making sure the league has a solid legal and financial structure that will stand the test of time. You adjust when different problems come up. The idea is to keep talking."

"... He's been through every era of the game and when he tells you something, it's directly related to something he's done. He's watched the game change and changed it. The environment of the Boston Celtics is quality, and that's because of Red. It wouldn't be the same without him ..."

... Larry Bird

This autumn, John Capouya of *Sport Magazine* was preparing a preview of the NBA and he called Auerbach for some views on the Celtics. "I wondered if Red had mellowed," Capouya related. "But three months after last year's Finals had ended, Red was still fuming about the 14-1 foul discrepancy in Game Four of The Finals. 'A major reason we were beaten in that game,' Red told me. That's the thing about Red: he's always taking a stance for his team." So when Auerbach is asked to comment on quotes from Pat Riley concerning Riley's dissatisfaction with the Garden and the Celtics, Auerbach doesn't back down. "All I can say is that he (Riley) doesn't talk much when

he's winning. No complaints when he wins in Boston. Hey, we have an old building. He complains that it isn't air-conditioned! What, do the Celtics play in an air-conditioned half of the court and the Lakers play in an area of the Garden where it's hot? You say Riley is a good coach ... He's been fortunate, too. He's coached a team that has great talent. When he has injuries, they're not such a great club. Then they lose nine out of seventeen. To tell you the truth, I don't even think about (Riley's criticisms)."

"I think about *this team*," he says, directing his gaze to the Celtics. "I spent a lot of this year admiring the job K.C. has done with the team, because we've been injured too. I'm very proud of this group of guys," he continues, and briefly analyzes the Celtics' luminescent starting five. "Larry Bird is an exception to my rule, which says you build a team first with a center and then a point guard. This is because Larry is a special talent, not strictly a forward. He is part center, part guard, too. His passing is brilliantly conceived, his rebounding strong, work ethic great, all that with a scorer's mind-set. I've thought Robert Parish was great since the time he came here, and I credit Bill Fitch for making him into a fullcourt player. Briefly: I respect Dennis Johnson's leadership on the floor. When he's ready, everybody follows. Kevin McHale is such an offensive threat that he opens up the entire floor for the rest of the team. And I think the ballclub is elevated because Danny Ainge is such a competitor."

"You see, everything is predicated on how an individual contributes to winning," he says, cigar smoke floating into the air, almost mystically allowing his inner eye to create this winning system. The eternal Celtics system — intelligent passing, running the floor, industrious defense, clutch play — through four eras when players like Russell, Cowens and Bird won and led the way to sixteen championships. "It's harder than it looks sometimes. I think a key to winning is having players who want the ball in crunch time: John Havlicek was like that, Bob Cousy, Bird. They're shooters and they're people who are confident enough to shoot even on off-nights. I remember in a seventh game (1957), Bill Sharman was something like 1-19 (FGs) but I told him to keep on shooting, he'd make 'em. I'd be willing to go down with my best. I think winning comes because practices are sound, interesting and competitive and your coach has a feel for people and for the game. A coach can't lead through fear and he can't make the game too complicated. From the front office, you win because you're in touch with the team and you have a good network of contacts. Bobby Knight (of IU) told me that Brad Lohaus would be a great player, and I'm very impressed with Lohaus. You stay in touch. That's the same with your own people; I used to talk with Cousy and Havlicek about the game and our opponents, because they were out there. I still do — I'll speak with Larry and DJ ... a few ... There's a delicate balance, I guess, but winning basketball always gets down to fundamentals. Does the team play strong fundamental defense? Do you execute the plays? Because if you're efficient at technique, then the necessary intensity will be there. The concentration required to win will be there."

By Jim Rucidlo

It's as if there's someone standing next to him saying, "Dennis, turn it up a notch, Dennis." Someone who appears in the last few minutes of a game, saying "Dennis, it's the playoffs!"

Time's running out for Dennis Johnson, after Mark Jackson's shot put the Knicks up 85-84 with less than four minutes remaining in the fourth game of the best-of-five series.

Down the court come the Celtics, looking tired and grim. In this match-up between the Eastern Conference's top seed, Boston had all the weapons, but New York has the one thing they're missing: heart.

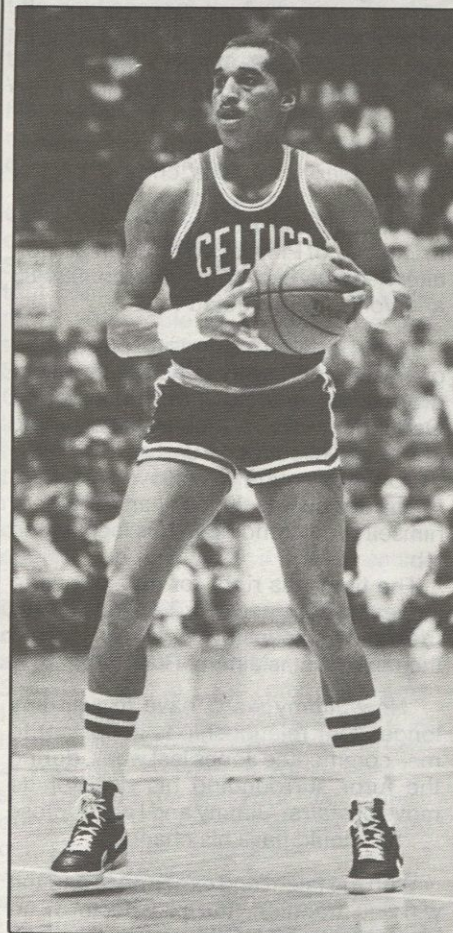
As the clock winds down, the Celtics try to force the ball inside, but there's nothing there. It's kicked back out and into the hands of the quarterback, DJ.

In his twelfth NBA season, Johnson is appearing in a playoff for his eleventh consecutive year. Threatening to send the Celtics back to Boston with two humiliating defeats, the hoigan Knicks showed no respect for their more experienced opponents.

But then a little voice in his mind says, "Dennis, this is the playoffs, Dennis." As if possessed, DJ uncharacteristically launches a three-point rocket ... swish. The Celtics are on top 87-85, and were never to trail the hapless New Yorkers again.

Even though the Knicks trailed only by two with less than three and a half minutes to play, fans should have left Madison Square Garden then, because Dennis Johnson and his little voice turned it up a notch, and the Celtics have found their heart.

Before the final whistle sounded, Johnson added one steal, two assists and two rebounds, toward a 102-94 win and a berth in the Conference Semi-finals. In the process, DJ had a triple-double — 19 points, 10 rebounds and 12 assists.



Dennis Johnson: In Good Company

DJ is Inspired During Playoffs

The Little Voice

Fans not used to seeing this kind of performance by DJ should take a look at a Playoff Record book, and see some of the company Johnson keeps. He's surrounded by names like Chamberlain, Havlicek and Baylor.

The often-maligned Celtics guard never questions his own abilities, and now has people looking at their questions as questions which never should have been asked.

"It's DJ's job to get the ball to people in the best position to score, and to play tough defense," said Larry Bird after DJ's

all-around play led to a 26-point win in Game Two of the first round series.

Dennis' play brings back images of the 1987 Eastern Conference Finals. This time, Isiah Thomas is trying to inbound the ball after Detroit has just gone up by one. Bird steals Thomas' inbounds pass and Dennis Johnson cuts toward the basket.

Fifteen thousand fans are sitting on the edges of their seats, mouths agape. Nobody on the court or on the bench has time to react. It's only Larry Bird and Dennis Johnson.

A little voice is speaking to DJ, "This is the playoffs, Dennis."

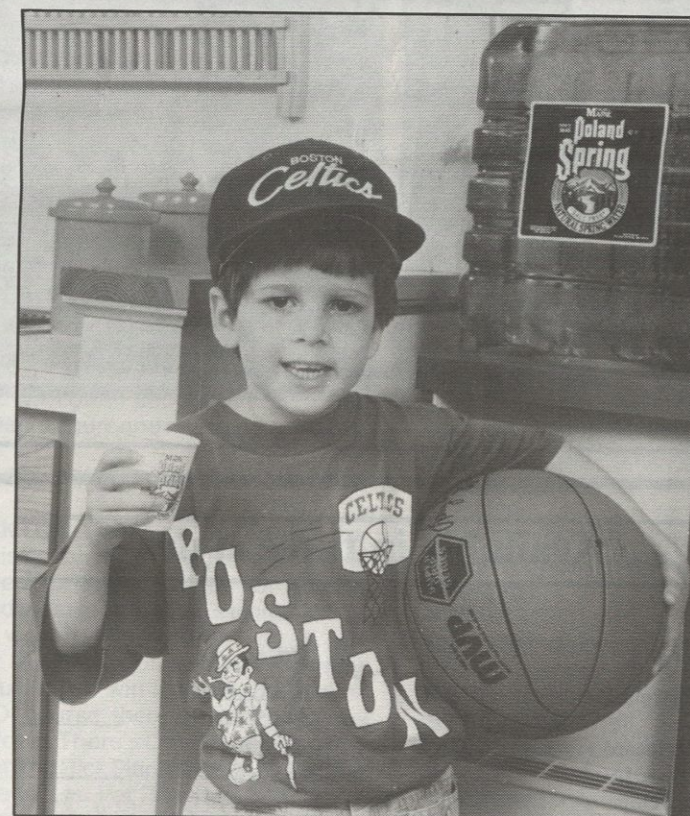
Cutting toward the basket, Johnson grabs the pass from Bird and lays it in. It looks easy ... BUT, if it was so easy, why hadn't anyone else done it. The feet of eight other people were glued to the floor.

Fans everywhere remember Bird stealing the ball, but DJ's basket seems to have been lost in the excitement. It's Dennis Johnson who turns Bird's steal into a great play, and not just a last-second desperation shot.

It's hard to say what makes DJ tick — riding through most of the season like a salty veteran, and then emerging after a grueling 82-game season playing with the tenacity and enthusiasm of an impish rookie. In sports parlance, Dennis Johnson is a gamer.

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Jimmy Rodgers to Lead Celtics in '88-89

Next Year's Coach

By Bob Schron

The long awaited coaching position for Jimmy Rodgers is finally at hand. The announcement of Coach K.C. Jones that he intends to vacate the coaching position at the end of the current playoff season, opens the door for Rodgers, a solid professional.

"If this is what K.C. has decided to do," commented Rodgers in Springfield, where he was attending the Hall of Fame inductions last week, "then I'm certain that he is doing the best thing for his family and for himself. I'm excited about the potential opportunity for coaching."

"Normally, an announcement like K.C.'s would send shudders up and down the spines of Celtics' fans," stated General Manager Jan Volk, a close friend of Rodgers. "But there won't be any concern this time, not with Jimmy Rodgers available."

"He's a great communicator and a great person. I think he's learned a lot by being around K.C. . ."

... Kevin McHale

Jimmy Rodgers became embroiled in an unwanted controversy last summer when he was prepared to move on to take the then-vacant New York Knicks' head coaching job. But the Celtics and the Knicks failed to agree upon terms for compensation for Rodgers leaving Boston to join their Atlantic division and long-time rival. As recently as six months ago, when the New Jersey Nets' position became available, Rodgers refused to even entertain questions regarding rumors that he might take the job, because of the heat last summer. Now, all has changed.

"I think Jimmy Rodgers will make an



Jimmy Rodgers: Very Qualified

excellent coach," commented Danny Ainge, at practice last week. "Now that K.C.'s done what he's decided to do, it's understandable why the Celtics fought so hard to keep him (when the Knicks wanted Rodgers)."

"He's a great communicator and a great person," added Kevin McHale. "I think he's learned a lot by being around K.C. He's helped us as an assistant coach and I'm sure he'll help us as a head coach."

The Chicago-born Rodgers is both personally and professionally qualified. He played collegiately at Iowa under Hall of Famer Ralph Miller, one of the best coaches ever. After a season of head coaching at North Dakota, he began a near-decade long phase as an assistant coach under Bill Fitch. At Cleveland in the seventies and in Boston in the early eighties, Rodgers mastered technique under Fitch, who he described once as "a great teacher." Rodgers originally had plotted another destiny however; in 1979, after Fitch left Cleveland, Rodgers assumed the job of Director of Player Personnel with the Cavs and was on his way to constructing a playoff contender there. But a series of ownership shifts in Cleveland, culminating in the acquisition of the franchise by Ted Stepien, forcing Rodgers' decision to resign. This ultimately led him to re-unite with Fitch in Boston in 1980. After Fitch resigned in Boston, Rodgers remained as an assistant under K.C.

Rodgers gradually became respected as one of the very best judges of talent in the modern game, endlessly combing the college and professional ranks to help build the Celtics into a three-time champion in the eighties. His contributions led to the selection of such stars as McHale, Ainge, and later, Bill Walton, Jerry Sichting, Jim Paxson and draftees such as Reggie Lewis and Brad Lohaus. With Volk, they collaborated on the brilliant-turned-tragic trade which landed them the second choice in the whole 1986 draft in a swap with the Seattle SuperSonics. Len Bias, a superb player from the University of Maryland, was chosen by the Celtics but died two days later. These moves came after Rodgers was promoted to Director of Player Personnel in Boston after Red Auerbach semiretired in 1984-85 and Volk was promoted to GM.

Thus, Rodgers ascends to the position of head coach with penultimate background. He has mastered the "Xs and Os" under masters such as Miller, Fitch, Jones and of course, Auerbach. In terms of communicating with players of great talent, Jones was the best, and Rodgers himself is outstanding in this facet of the job.

The time was right for K.C. Jones to make a move, partially because of his friendship and sensitivity to the man and the talent that is Jimmy Rodgers.

"Now Jimmy won't have to wait any longer. Our relationship is important to me," commented Jones last week, during the furor surrounding his decision to move upstairs. "Jimmy and I are so close . . . he should have his chance."

With the talent and experience and the winning tradition, the prospects of an ideal future with Rodgers as head coach of the Celtics seems assured.

INTERVIEW

Dick Stockton Looks at the Playoffs



Dick Stockton: Larry Bird for MVP

With wide-ranging sports broadcast experience, from Boston Red Sox play-by-play to hosting the long-gone (and probably gratefully forgotten) "Sports Spectacular" for CBS, Dick Stockton is now just where he wants to be. For the past seven seasons, Stockton has served as Number One play-by-play man for the NBA on CBS. Recently *Celtics Pride* sought out some of Dick Stockton's NBA observations, just prior to the start of his busiest time of the year.

CELTICS PRIDE: What's your assessment of the Celtics this season?

STOCKTON: I've seen the Celtics a lot this season — They're still our number one draw. I think they're ahead of what they were a year ago. Last year the Celtics limped into the NBA Finals, after being heavily challenged twice in the Eastern Conference playoffs. This year the team is (a) a lot more rested; (b) playing with a lot more zip; (c) getting more of a contribution from the bench, even though they don't have one man coming off the bench in typical Sixth Man fashion. They've had a fine year. Going in, the Celtics have an excellent chance of regaining the title.

CELTICS PRIDE: Your overview of the NBA this season — any surprises?

STOCKTON: There were a lot of surprises. The fact that there were eight teams that won 50 or more games is a banner year for the league. It shows that there are more good teams. When people talk about parity in other sports, they talk about teams being even. In the NBA there are just a lot more stronger clubs. Obviously the surprises, not necessarily in this order: the Chicago Bulls, improving as much as they did; the Cleveland Cavaliers, finally becoming a team that is now going to challenge for a division title next season; the New York Knicks, now seem to be the second-strongest team in the Atlantic division; and out West, the Western Conference generally has become so strong that there now may be a good argument as to which conference is stronger.

CELTICS PRIDE: What's your outlook on the playoff match-ups?

STOCKTON: It's silly to predict. I think that going in, the Lakers appear to be more vulnerable in the West against teams like Portland, Denver, Utah or Seattle, than the Celtics in the East. The Celtics won't get the same kind of challenge as they did last year, except perhaps from Detroit. And in that one I think the Celtics have really proven their dominance at home. They have the home court. So I just think the Celtics' trail could be easier this year, if they're healthy.

CELTICS PRIDE: So are you going out on a limb and picking an ultimate winner, as the CBS NBA analysts have?

STOCKTON: No, I don't pick any teams. I let other people pick. You can only lose in picking. You make everyone else mad at you. And so what, if you're right? It shouldn't be the analyst's role either, I don't think. If it were up to me (and you can say it's just sports and it's fun), I would say don't pick, because as soon as you commit on a team, all the fans for the other team think that everything you're saying is geared to your wanting to be right. And if there's an upset, they

say I thought you said we weren't going to do it. So I just think it's not worth it.

CELTICS PRIDE: Your choice for MVP?

STOCKTON: I picked Larry Bird. You can make an argument for three people, but I just think it's the intangibles, something you can't measure with numbers or wins and losses. Michael Jordan is spectacular, he can take a game over. He can score 59 points in a game. I think he's a better defensive player and quicker than Larry. I think Magic Johnson's value to the Lakers was evident when he was out with injury, and they lost games. But I just think that, of all the people, Larry Bird finds a way to win, finds a way to get it done with other people. And so he's a formidable figure and my choice for MVP.

CELTICS PRIDE: And Coach of the Year?

STOCKTON: Pat Riley. I just think the award is becoming a joke. It should either be called "Coach of the Year" or "Coach who did most to improve his team." K.C.'s never won it, Pat's never won it. It's almost like if you don't win it on the way up, you'll never win it when you're winning. Of course, there are a lot of candidates for it. There's Doug Moe and Mike Schuler and Rick Pitino and Doug Collins. But the fact is, Pat Riley has coached a team that's won three times in this decade.

CELTICS PRIDE: To what do you attribute the steady increase in viewers for the NBA on CBS during your tenure?

STOCKTON: Ratings have gone up, but they'll level off at some point, because nothing just continues to go up. The point is, at one time the NBA was a nondescript enterprise to have and now it's a winning one.

CELTICS PRIDE: But why the rise?

STOCKTON: Bird and Magic Johnson. They've been the key people. They play a great brand of basketball. And that wasn't the case in the late '70s. People

saw a lot of things they didn't like about pro ball back then. In the '70s there were key personalities, but they weren't the personalities who had the work ethic that Magic and Bird and Jordan and Julius Erving have had. It's just the best basketball found anywhere.

CELTICS PRIDE: You've had three analysts to work with, right?

STOCKTON: Yes. Bill Russell, Tom Heinsohn and now Billy (Cunningham). I enjoy(ed) working with all three of them. Bill was a legend, and saw things the way he saw them. Tommy Heinsohn is more of an active coach working with the moment, talking of what should be done. And Billy sees the game from many different angles, and gives a light approach at times. They've all been good guys to work with.

CELTICS PRIDE: Were you surprised when Tommy Heinsohn's position changed?

STOCKTON: I'm never surprised at anything that happens in this business.

CELTICS PRIDE: Did you see it coming?

STOCKTON: Well, no, I couldn't, because we worked together four years. And Billy was happy doing what he was doing, as #2 guy in college and pro. This was a decision that was made by CBS. We were never consulted.

CELTICS PRIDE: How would you describe your approach to play-by-play? Your broadcasting style?

STOCKTON: Let the pictures tell the story. Don't talk too much. Come in with the key nuggets and anecdotes and facts. Then let it breathe. Work with your analyst to bring out the best in him. And try not to state the obvious . . . I just search for the things I think will enhance the broadcast. But the trick is *when* you use them and *how* you use them. It's all timing, all instinct. You know, it's really been kind of easy this year.

CELTICS PRIDE: As a broadcaster, how do you deal with the fact that sometimes fans won't let you forget something you've said in years gone by? What I'm getting at here is, for example, do you have any regrets about how you described the fight between Jerry Sichting and Ralph Sampson, in the series a couple of years ago?

STOCKTON: No, I have no regrets. They had a fight and I said that Sampson shouldn't have been thrown out of the game. Basically what I meant at the time was that, and if I had it to do over again, I would say that Sampson should be thrown out of the game because fighting is dangerous and no one should be fighting. However, it should also be brought out that in this case, it was my opinion that Jerry Sichting had instigated Sampson, who started by throwing the punch. So Sampson shouldn't have been thrown out. But the point that I wanted to make (about Sichting's role), I still would make today. The only problem is that when I made the point I claimed Sampson shouldn't be thrown out of the game, which was wrong, which I said the very next day. But there was a lot of commotion about it in Boston (demonstrations, picketing, marathon radio call-in shows, etc.). I guess it just showed how prominent we are in what we do in our jobs, you know.

CELTICS PRIDE: Do you still feel any hostility at all when you go up to Boston?

STOCKTON: No, I don't care. I don't see that. I go up there to do games and you know, I used to do the Celtics broadcasts when I was in Boston. I'm very close with Red and people surrounding the Celtics. But I'm also close to Pat Riley. And I'm close to a lot of people. But we don't see the games the way fans do. Fans who know that I had once done the Celtics games are surprised when they see that maybe I may make a comment that may favor another team. And they can't understand it. In L.A., they think we're all Celtics fans. So it shows that we're doing our job. But basically I could care less what anyone says about anything. (Laughs.) The only people I have to please are my bosses at CBS! (Laughs again.) I don't care what anyone thinks other than that.

CELTICS PRIDE: So it didn't really affect you, all that went on?

STOCKTON: No — all I want to see is a good game. I don't care who wins.

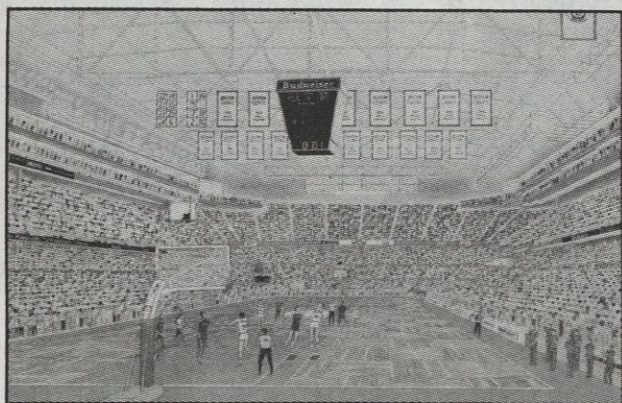
CELTICS PRIDE: I see Tommy Heinsohn is accused of being pro-Celtic over and over again.

STOCKTON: I think it comes from Tommy's working in cable — SportsChannel and his association with it. But I think when broadcasters do games they're so engrossed and concentrating on the game, they're not fans. They're not sitting there with popcorn and a beer, rooting for a team.

CELTICS PRIDE: In closing, can you relate any significant personal memories of the Celtics in the playoffs or Finals?

STOCKTON: All the Celtics-Lakers championship games were big. And the great Celtics-Knicks playoff series with Walt Frazier and JoJo White and Cowens. I don't have one memory of the Celtics in the playoffs because it's been one great memory of them.

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COURTSIDE VIEW

By Eddie Gillyooly

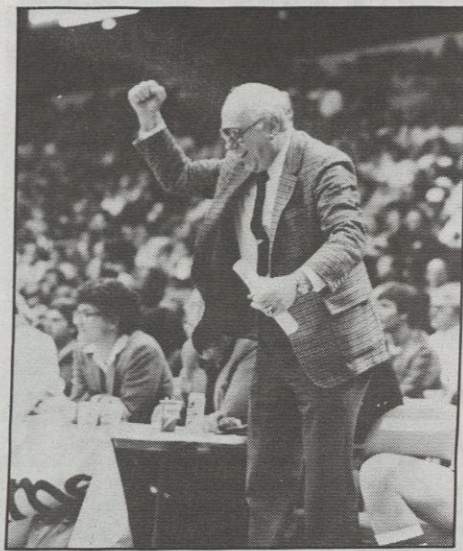
The Task Ahead

When the Celtics won the first of their 16 titles in 1957, the team only had to play two playoff series for a total of 12 games. They won the title in 10 games. In today's playoff setup, a championship team has to play four series and a possible 26 games.

It's not an easy task, facing four different teams, one in a five-game series and three in seven-game series. Injuries play a vital role in the quest for the championship. It is grueling.

In the 31 years during the Celtics championship era, the Celtics have reached the championship series 19 times and have won the title 16 times. They were defeated in the title round in 1958 by St. Louis, in 1985 by Los Angeles and again in 1987 by Los Angeles. They lost all three series 4-2.

During this time, the Celtics have missed the playoffs only four times (1970, 71, 78, 79). Overall, they have won 234



Red Coached Nine Championships

playoff games and lost only 135. They have won 57 of the 68 different series.

The top rivalry over the years has been against Philadelphia. They own a 44-34 edge in post-season series. They are 36-25 against the Lakers, including the one year in Minneapolis. They own a 9-2 series edge over the Lakers.

Including the four years in St. Louis, the Atlanta Hawks have managed to beat the Celtics only once in eight series. They are 3-1 in St. Louis and 4-0 in Atlanta. The overall playoff mark is 28-17.



Bill Russell: 12 Finals Appearances

The Knicks entered this year's playoffs on the short end. The New Yorkers lost four of series to the Celtics and the Celts have the edge in games 19-15.

Among other current teams, the Celtics are 10-0 vs. Chicago, 2-0 vs. San Antonio, 4-2 vs. Phoenix, 7-3 vs. Cleveland, 9-6 vs. Washington, 16-5 vs. Houston, 16-11 vs. Milwaukee, and 23-7 vs. Detroit.

Of the eight teams above, only Milwaukee and Washington were successful in beating the Celtics in a playoff series. The Bucks did it in 1983 with a 4-0 sweep. The Bullets accomplished the feat in 1975, with K.C. Jones as their coach that year.

In Bill Russell's 13 seasons, the Celtics were in the championship finals 12 times. They won 11 titles, losing only to St. Louis in 1958, when Russell suffered an ankle injury. In 1967, the Russell-led Celtics were eliminated in the Conference finals by Philadelphia, 4-1. Philly went on to defeat San Francisco, 4-3, for the Championship.

In the 1970s, when the Celtics climbed back with Dave Cowens in the pivot, they reached the finals twice, winning both times against Milwaukee (4-3) and Phoenix (4-2).

The 1970s also saw the Celtics out of the playoffs four times and losing the Conference finals twice to New York (72-73), once to Washington (1975) and once to Philadelphia (1977).

With Larry Bird providing the leadership, the situation has been much improved with the Celtics reaching the championship Finals five times in Bird's eight seasons. They won the title three times.

They lost the Conference battles twice to Philadelphia (1980, 82) and to Milwaukee (1983).

Entering this season, the Celtics have reached the championship finals four straight times, winning two and losing two under K.C. Jones. They defeated Los Angeles (1984) and Houston (1986) for the title, and lost to Los Angeles (1985, 87) in The Finals.

Bill Fitch, in his four seasons as Celtics coach, won one title, defeating Houston (1981). The other three years, the Celtics were eliminated by Philadelphia and Milwaukee.

Red Auerbach coached nine championship teams, Russell two (player-coach), Tom Heinsohn two, Bill Fitch one, and K.C. Jones two.

In the last four years, the Celtics have 16 playoff series, winning 14 of them. Their only series losses have been to the LA Lakers in this period.

They were 15-8 in 1984, when they defeated LA for the title, 13-8 in 1985 when they lost to LA for the title, 15-3 in 1986 when they beat Houston for the title, and 13-10 when they lost to LA for the title last year.

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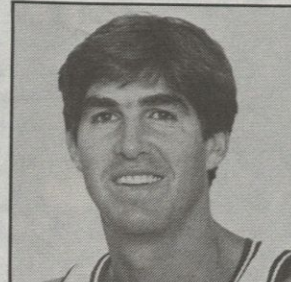
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CELTICS PERSPECTIVE

How Do You Feel About the Collective Bargaining Agreement?

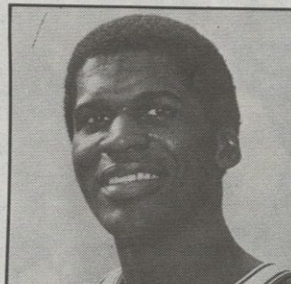
What do the Celtics players think about the collective bargaining agreement that was reached April 26th? There were some changes: Seven-year veterans could be free agents this season with no Right of First Refusal, and this veterans' status will be lessened to five years after next season. Also, the college draft will be reduced from seven rounds to three rounds this season, and to two rounds after 1989. The salary cap remains, with an upward adjustment and the minimum salary was increased to \$150,000.

Mark Acres: I'm sort of a bystander in these matters — I'm glad the minimum is up and I'm happy because it appears that the rookies coming into the league will have more freedom. But for the longer shots coming into the league, there might be more of a problem since they're negotiating themselves into a position to play. Since they're not originally selected by the team, they might have a tougher time making it. But generally, I'm happy that the money that the league is making from television contacts and record attendance is beginning to filter down to the players.



Mark Acres

Robert Parish: I think the bottom line is that both sides were happy and, since I do have confidence in the people representing us, I have to assume we made out OK. The issue of player freedom is an important one. I remember that when I was initially thinking of securing a contract in Boston in 1981, I just thought my options were limited and that was when there was a more liberal system of free agency. I wanted to stay in Boston, but sometimes the negotiations can be very tough. That's why I was pleased to see a relaxation of the free agency requirements, allowing veterans of seven and then five years to have more freedom. From the other side, it's obvious that the Salary Cap has provided a structure from which we're able to build a league on.



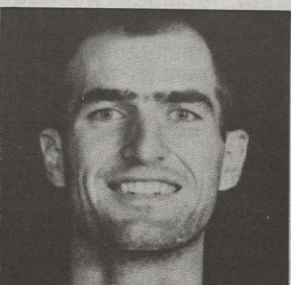
Robert Parish

Dirk Minniefeld: I was happy with it. It's good for the players and it helps me because I'm young and I have many years in front of me. The rookies also have increased bargaining power, too. I think it's important to point out that nothing's been signed yet, that one man spoke for the majority, but that, primarily, it still is a good thing. Cutting the draft rounds will make the camps considerably more competitive and that's something to watch. I was glad that the sides worked out an agreement. I think the salary cap should stay — each team made \$111.1 million per team so I can't argue with success.



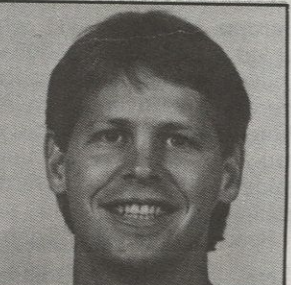
Dirk Minniefeld

Fred Roberts: I was glad to see the changes put in that favor the players. Little things count — per diems, etc. Also, the rights for free agents are a boost to the players. Another factor which I liked was the increased pension. I was surprised and disappointed that there wasn't a boost in the playoff shares. I think that teams play hard to reach a point of success as a team, but then the reward at the end of that time isn't equal to their effort. I mean, if a guy is making several hundred thousand dollars a year, it's difficult to think that winning a first round share would bring him \$35,000 and think that's equal.



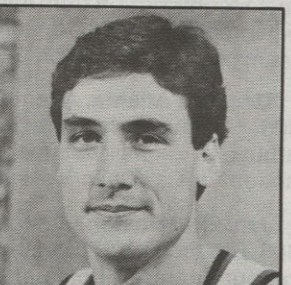
Fred Roberts

Danny Ainge: I don't really care all that much. I just want to play basketball. I think it's good in that the draft is reduced. It's better for the players and for the teams; the teams bring in ten rookies and a lot of the kids don't have a chance. By the time the teams cut them late in the Pre-Season, they don't have a chance to catch on with another team.

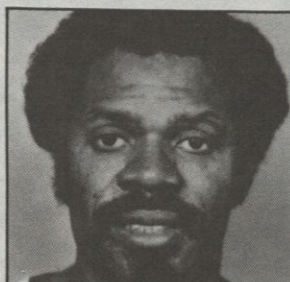


Danny Ainge

Jim Paxson: The settlement of the law suit is a positive step for both sides. We didn't decertify the union and there is no open market, which is a plus for the league as a whole; the best of both worlds. I think that after five years, a player shouldn't be bound to a team; the reduction to three rounds in the draft shouldn't matter much because after the third round, players are considerable long shots anyway; the salary cap structure is a viable system created five years ago and is helping the league grow and be stable.

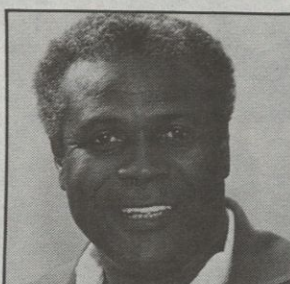


Jim Paxson



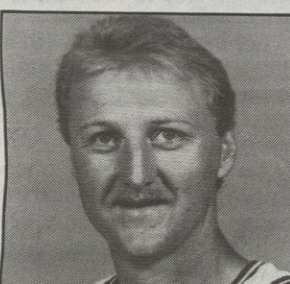
Artis Gilmore

Artis Gilmore: I'm pleased there won't be a strike, but other than that, I don't want to comment. Our player representative, Jim Paxson, should do that. He should be the one to speak for the players.



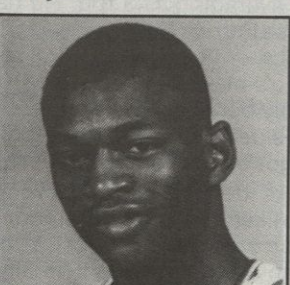
K.C. Jones

K.C. Jones: The spirit of negotiation was impressive and for that reason, I have to be pleased that the deal was reasonable. I think the most important matter in negotiations of any kind, is to look down the road and see what your requirements might be four or five years from when you're sitting down to bargain. (The sports environment is subject to so many changes, that this time period is right). I was happy to see that more retired players were brought into the pension plan. That was overdue. An average salary of close to \$1 million for players in the early nineties? Now, that's a pretty good number.



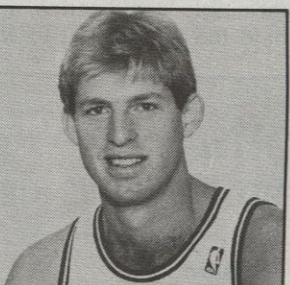
Larry Bird

Larry Bird: I haven't really read too much about it, so it's hard for me to comment, but I am happy that the minimum salary is up because players work hard to reach this league and since their careers are relatively short, it's important for them to get what they can. I'm glad about the pension increase, too; also the relaxation regarding free agents is a boost for us. I think the players should have more freedom after playing in the league and earning a veteran's status. This is a just reward for the time they've put in.



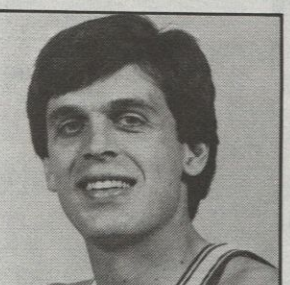
Reggie Lewis

Reggie Lewis: I was happy about the settlement and happy because it appears the players have more rights. I'd be glad to have at least the opportunity to consider free agency after five years and I'm glad about the minimum salary increase. It's a little difficult to think that far ahead just yet. I'm mostly thinking about becoming an established player in the league.



Brad Lohaus

Brad Lohaus: I think the agreement will help the younger players and the veterans. The pension is better and I think the lesser benefits that the players got, including increased salary and benefits make it better for the player. The five years commitment to the team before total free agency is too far away to think about. But there's always a chance that even if you go in the free market, you might not get your fair worth. The fact that the salary cap remains doesn't really matter to me.



Kevin McHale

Kevin McHale: I'm glad there was a settlement and the obvious things representing improvement for the players. But to be honest, I'm not personally concerned: I have a pretty long deal with the Celtics now and I'm hoping to end my career here. The only way I'd foresee changing teams is if we're in the middle of a rebuilding program and we didn't have a chance to win, then I'd consider asking for a change. I'd go to another team that might be contending because I'd want an opportunity to play on one more championship team. I'd come in off the bench and play just a few minutes. So I'm not really thinking about most of the issues that were settled. I'm secure with things financially; toward the end of my career, my goals would be strictly based on winning another title.



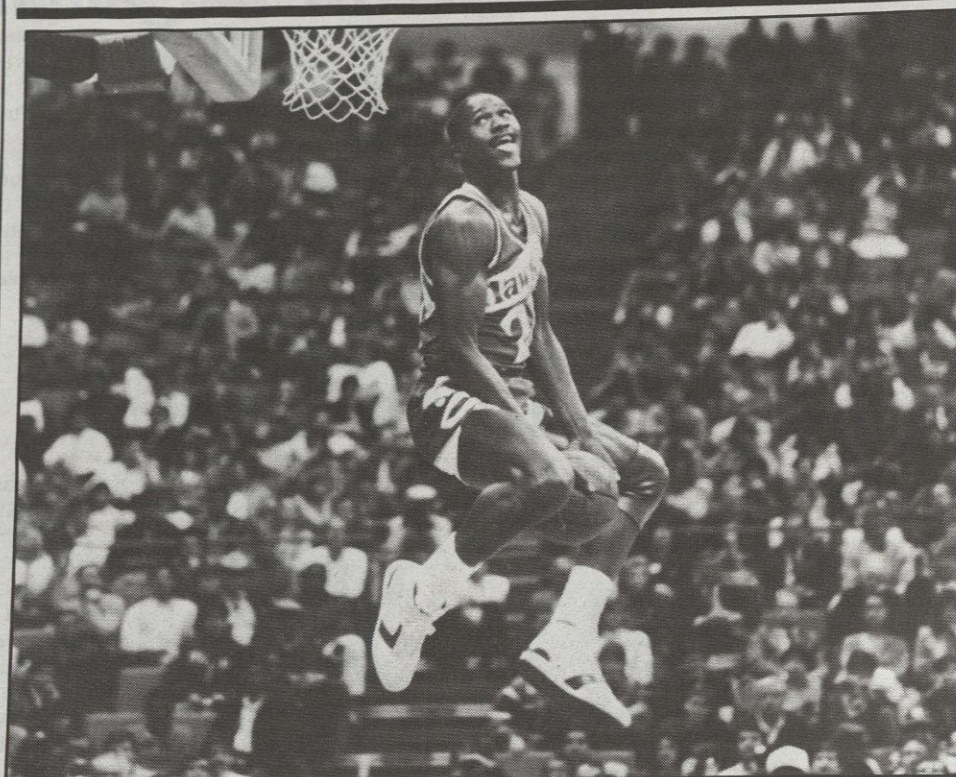
Atlanta Hawks are Next Opponent

Scouting Report

The Atlanta Hawks 121-111 victory in Game Five of the first round series against the Bucks confirmed several of the Hawks' best talents. With Dominique Wilkins coming out of the locker room on the fly, delivering 16 first-quarter points, the rest of the Hawks followed suit. Soon Kevin Willis, Antoine Carr and Doc Rivers were driving the lanes for explosive, momentum-building dunks and lay-ins. Glenn 'Doc' Rivers ran the offense superbly and then the Hawks' defense, one of the best in the league, became that much more austere. Jack Sikma, a major factor in the Game Three and Four wins, (garnering 16 boards in Game Four), played sluggishly, and the Bucks couldn't respond. Apparently, players like Paul Pressey needed more prodding, more of the Don Nelson style than Del Harris' more distant handling. John Lucas, whose three-point bombarding was so crucial in Game Three, never was that much of a factor. So the Hawks move on and renew the rivalry with the Celtics that has been such a turning point during the past three seasons. The Hawks' main figures — Wilkins, Rivers, Carr (the Hawks players think he is the third-best player on the whole team, off the bench), and Cliff Levingston have challenged the older Celtics aggressively the past three years, but Boston has thus far prevailed.

Two years ago the teams met in the Eastern Conference finals, after the Celtics had dominated the season series, 6-0. Boston went on to handle the Hawks yet again in the playoffs, winning that set 4-1, including a key third-game win in Atlanta that the Cs won for coach K.C. Jones. The Celtics' players were miffed that Mike Fratello was honored as Coach of the Year before that game. They thought Jones deserved that award. Last season, the teams met on the final day of the regular season with the winner to have the homecourt advantage for the entire Eastern Conference playoffs. Boston again won, 118-107, giving them the edge. Atlanta never fully recovered and lost in the semi-final round of the post-season to Detroit.

1988 Playoffs to Date: The Celtics eliminated the Knicks last week, 3-1, before beginning the present series, winning two games easily in Boston (119-92, 128-102) and then, after losing Game Three in Madison Square Garden,



Dominique Wilkins: Key to the Hawks

coming from behind (83-77 NY with the ball) to win, 102-94. The important statistics for Boston were consistent with the team's improved performance down the stretch in the regular season. Larry Bird (28.3) and Kevin McHale (24.3) paced the scoring, and Dennis Johnson ran the interior-based offense to perfection, averaging 17.8 ppg and numerous assists. DJ was the MVP of the series. Robert Parish was outstanding on the boards for Boston, averaging 11.3 rpg. He had to be, because Patrick Ewing was a force for the Knicks — 18.8 ppg and 12.8 rpg. Danny Ainge's play tailed off a bit (10.0 ppg), possibly because of the increased priority to inside points. The three-point king never got off in the four games.

The Hawks defeated the Bucks by parlaying Wilkins' always-outstanding play with strong supporting performances from Randy Wittman (finally), Willis, Carr and Spud Webb. Webb, although silent through much of the finale, played outstandingly in the series, and the Hawks held the homecourt to win

the round 3-2. "They had the better athletes," commented Bucks' GM Bob Zuffaleto. "In the end, they were able to put us away." Atlanta used strong defense to win each of their games — 110-107 in Game One, 104-97 in Game Two. After two defeats at The Mecca, they played a more inspired Decider behind Wilkins.

Atlanta-Boston, 1988. For the series that began Wednesday night, veteran observers of the game as well as the uninitiated will quickly know what to expect. "There aren't too many surprises," surmises K.C. Jones. "We'll try to keep the ball out of Dominique Wilkins' hands because he can hurt you in so many ways. He's a dynamite offensive player. Then, there's Doc Rivers: he had an All-Star year and he came off a big fifth game against Milwaukee. When those two get it going, Atlanta can be very tough." Yet, in this series, a major factor has been the Hawks' inability to win in the Boston Garden (the last Hawks' victory in the Garden: March 1, 1985, when Wilkins' 38 led the way to a 114-105 win). "I don't know why we haven't been able to win there," said Rivers from Atlanta. "But there comes a time in your career when you have to start winning important games in the Boston Garden if you're going to be a champion."

Results of this year's games:

Nov. 25 at Boston. Boston 117, Atlanta 102. Celtics defeat Atlanta without a major contribution from injured Bird. Cs win breaks first place deadlock between teams and gives Boston 9-3 mark.

Dec. 1 at Atlanta. Atlanta 120, Boston 106. Wilkins scores 22 to lead balanced attack in game that marks return to action for Cs' Kevin McHale.

Jan. 22 at Boston. Boston 124, Atlanta 106. Bird scores 27, Parish gathers in 12 rebounds and Cs dominate from start to finish in Garden.

Jan. 26 at Atlanta. Boston 102, Atlanta

97. In one of the key wins of the season, Dennis Johnson sparks a rally in the final two minutes. Cs score game's final ten points to win in the Omni.

March 13 at Boston. Boston 117, Atlanta 100. Celtics breeze; led by Bird's 28 and an offense that frustrates the Hawks' double-team, Boston leads by 74-46 before Jones substitutes liberally.

April 22 at Atlanta. Atlanta 133, Boston 106. Commissioner's office demands Johnson and Parish play when the two are resting injuries after Cs climb to clinch the Eastern Conference.

Key Matchups. This is a series that features intriguing matchups, both between team philosophies and exciting individuals. The key area, apart from the Bird-Wilkins white-hot war, resides in the middle in this playoff. Jon Koncak's absence has forced Mike Fratello to use Kevin Willis in the pivot more, because Tree Rollins just doesn't seem to have it. Scott Hastings played well against Milwaukee, but this threesome can't match Robert Parish's stature and productivity. Mark Acres struggled against Ewing, but he can succeed against Atlanta. He had a season-high in rebounding versus the Hawks, March 11, with 11. Another key is the teams' double-teaming decisions. Boston will go after Atlanta, likely with the lightning-quick Ainge. The latter's tactics have served Boston well, especially against others like Detroit's Dantley. If Wilkins can get off, he's capable of stealing a game in Boston, which would drastically alter the temperament of the series. Similarly, Atlanta will likely try to double on McHale, whose inside offense, in Red Auerbach's words, "opens up the whole floor." If this is effective, Ainge and Bird, so successful from outside, will again have to deliver. Finally, the point guards in this series are critical. Johnson of Boston is having a peak playoff, and has again proven himself a player capable of winning games. Rivers and Webb are effective against Boston; Doc's a cool leader and Webb a comet through the night, a player who consistently pushes the ball up the floor. Jones has high respect for his game.

Factors and Statistics. Wilkins has played very well and is the fifth-leading scorer in the playoffs with his 31 ppg average. The Hawks struggled late in the year, chiefly because they lost John Battle's 10.7 ppg for fifteen games. The latter's young but improving, part of a growing system. Wittman's season-high in Game Five of the Milwaukee series has to be a factor for Atlanta. Besides Wilkins' 31, Atlanta had five players with scoring averages between 10.0-14.4. Rivers was fifth in the league with 9.5 assists. Boston's Ainge shrugged off 10 ppg scoring to make a key steal in the NY finale.

For Boston, however, statistics aren't the important factors, events are. One: the Cs have been injury-free and have begun the series after five days of rest. "It's welcome this season," said Bird. "The Knicks were tough." Two: the Celtics remain very dependent on Johnson; they had another outstanding season this year without his great season-long play, but his play the past two months has them thinking they can win it all. He's that good. Finally, with Jones' impending retirement, the veteran Celtics will be extremely motivated to win it for the coach they highly respect.

Nov. 25 at Boston. Boston 117, Atlanta 102. Celtics defeat Atlanta without a major contribution from injured Bird. Cs win breaks first place deadlock between teams and gives Boston 9-3 mark.

Dec. 1 at Atlanta. Atlanta 120, Boston 106. Wilkins scores 22 to lead balanced attack in game that marks return to action for Cs' Kevin McHale.

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Jan. 26 at Atlanta. Boston 102, Atlanta

Wayne Gretzky: The "Larry Bird" of Hockey?

Dimensions of Stardom

By Jan Wrotnowski

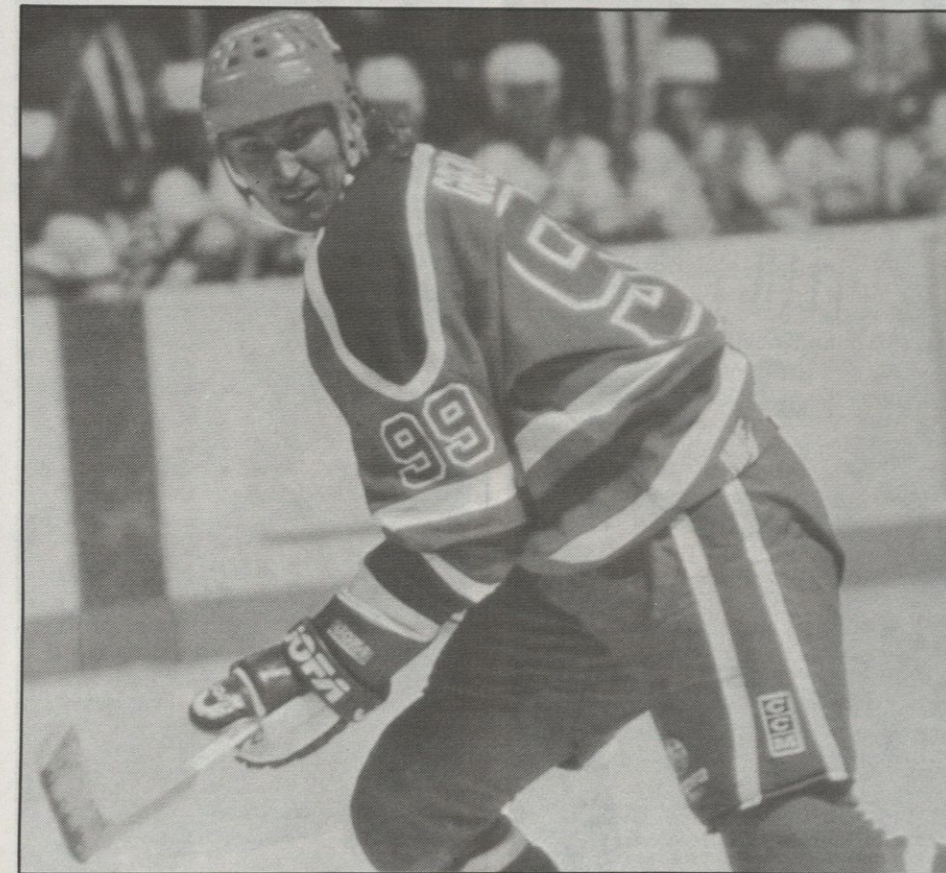
I think I've finally come to realize that I don't really know much about our neighbors to the north, the Canadians. In fact, it's quite embarrassing how narrow-minded we all can be down here, thinking of ourselves as the only Americans. But it's true, we do share this continent with other nations. And just expecting the rest of the world to see things as we see them and do things as we do, well, I'm afraid we can appear quite arrogant and ignorant in the eyes of our fellow North Americans. Anyway, why am I going off on this tangent?

Well, you see, I got this 'bright' idea to get a few quick quotes from Wayne Gretzky on subject matter relevant to *Celtics Pride*. Figuring you just pick up the phone and give the guy a call while he's holed up in his hotel room on the road, (of course, all athletes just love to receive phone calls from perfect strangers), and that would be that. The article would practically write itself. Well, I found out just how different and inaccurate a U.S. perspective can be.

OK, I'm not the world's or even this town's most knowledgeable hockey fan. But I have heard of Wayne Gretzky. I know it wouldn't be a stretch to label him a scoring genius in his sport. And I couldn't help but notice that his name keeps popping up in places too numerous to mention here, as well as the NHL record books. But just imagine, Gretzky's been named league MVP eight seasons in a row! And I also realize that in '87 he was voted the world's best player in *The Hockey News*. And in a much broader polling of sports fans, *USA Today* named Gretzky the fourth greatest athlete ever, following Babe Ruth, Jim Thorpe and Muhammed Ali. So maybe I should've had a clue to the dimensions of his stardom. But as I said, my U.S. perspective distorted my vision.

In Canada (and maybe some other places too, for all I know), Wayne Gretzky is a superstar of the highest magnitude. He's had a doll fashioned after him, a breakfast cereal created to carry his picture on the box, numerous contests in which some lucky Gretzky fanatics have won a chance to play on the ice with him or to just give him a kiss on the cheek. He was a friend and subject for the late artist Andy Warhol, who created five portraits of Gretzky. And he's been seen as such a hot property that one Hollywood type has even envisioned him as the next Cary Grant, if he wants to set his sights on films and TV! Well, as you can see, we're talking Canadian megastar here. Someone more on the order of a rock or movie star down in the U.S. And as you know, you don't just call up your average rock star and have a little chat. You have to go through his "people."

Now why was I pursuing this? And what does it have to do with the Celtics, anyway? Well, I'd read that Mr. Gretzky had said there were only two other athletes he'd pay to watch perform: Ivan Lendl and Larry Bird. So you can see the connection. I was thinking along the lines of hockey's 'Great One' talks about, even talks to, that would have been neat if I could have brought Bird and Gretzky together ... Oh well, I can dream, can't



Wayne Gretzky: Canada's Mega-Star

NBA, Players Agree on Contract

The NBA and the National Basketball Players Association have reached agreement on a new six-year labor contract extending through the 1993-94 season.

The agreement continues the salary cap, the NBA Draft and, in certain instances, the right of first refusal. It was reached in a seven-hour negotiating session held in New York on Monday, April 25 and approved by the NBA Board of Governors at its meeting the next day. It also has been approved by the Executive Board of the Players Association, according to General Counsel Larry Fleisher. As part of the agreement, the players are withdrawing their lawsuit against the league.

"As you would expect," said NBA Commissioner David J. Stern, "both sides made compromises from their original positions in order to reach agreement. The NBA owners and players have once again demonstrated their willingness to work together for an agreement which will enable our league to maintain its growth and allow our fans to continue enjoying NBA basketball — and the most exciting athletes in the world."

Following are key points of the new agreement:

Draft: This year's NBA Draft, to be held June 28 at the Felt Forum in New York, will be reduced from seven to three rounds. Thereafter, the draft will be two rounds.

Salary Cap: The salary cap will be computed in the same manner as in the past, and the players will continue to be guaranteed 53 percent of NBA revenues.

Right of First Refusal: Teams retain the right of first refusal at the end of each player's initial contract, regardless of length, or at the end of a specifically

negotiated extension of that contract (not to exceed eight years). Beyond a player's first contract, the right of first refusal will no longer apply to players who as of this season have been subject to the right of first refusal for six years. This time period is reduced to four years beginning in 1988-89 and to three years in 1993-94, the final year of the agreement.

What this means is that players who have been in the league for seven years as of the end of the current season (or five years as of next season or four years for the 1993-94 season), and are completing at least their second contract, are not subject to the right of first refusal.

In addition, in order to retain the right of first refusal, a player's team must tender a one-year contract for at least 125 percent of his previous salary. Teams are not permitted to match and trade a player who has signed an offer sheet as a veteran free agent, and they cannot accept consideration from another team in exchange for not exercising their right of first refusal. Finally, the right of first refusal applies only to players who are offered \$250,000 or more by their old teams.

Benefits: The players will receive substantial increases in most benefits, including pension, per diem, insurance, etc. In addition, the NBA and the Players Association agreed in principle that they would jointly provide a pension for pre-1965 players who are not covered by the existing NBA player pension plan.

The last agreement between the NBA and the National Basketball Players Association expired at the conclusion of the 1986-87 season. The new agreement will apply retroactively to the 1987-88 season.

1?) the Celtics' own 'Great One.' And besides, it's playoff time for both teams. It seemed like a good idea.

Well anyway, I went through Mr. Gretzky's "people." (Honestly, in Canada, with the popularity he has, he definitely needs his own people.) And a month and a half after my request, one of Mr. Gretzky's agents, Michael Barnett, kindly sent me a dictated, verbatim response to a few questions I had posed to his client. Could you really expect more from a superstar?

I asked Wayne why he enjoyed watching basketball and if he found it at all similar to hockey. His response: "I find basketball very enjoyable as a spectator sport. The manner in which offensive plays develop is very similar to hockey. The rotating and circling of the forwards, the pick plays and the attacking as a unit are all very prominent in hockey now, due to the European influence."

Then I said that I had read that he'd pay to see Larry Bird play. I asked him why, and also what he felt might be similar in their approaches to their respective sports. "Larry Bird's pure skill level never ceases to amaze me. When you think he can't possibly pull it out of his bag of tricks, is when he always does it. Our similarities probably lie in the fact that we both love to play our respective sports and thus we have no problem in always giving it 100%."

However, I think a little more could be added here. For it seems to me that both Gretzky and Larry Bird share other similarities. Both put the emphasis on offense in their games. Both know how to score and how to set up others to score, and they do both prolifically. Both players have willingly assumed leadership roles in order to help their teams win league titles. Both appear to have great vision and a superior feel and understanding for their sports. Neither athlete is terribly imposing physically, but both have found ways to intimidate and dominate opponents just by their presence. Both take the pressure they face and convert it into a positive, energizing force of personal challenge to spark themselves and their teammates. And perhaps a case can even be made that both Bird and Gretzky have in some ways changed the entire complexion of their sports: Bird's accomplishments in making the scoring/passing forward's position now so central to victory and Gretzky's style of speed, offense and skating replacing hockey's former emphasis on bumping and grinding out defense-oriented wins.

In closing, I asked Wayne what, as Larry Bird has his focal point for psyching up prior to home games (Bobby Orr's Number 4 hanging from the Garden rafters), his own pre-game source of inspiration is? Gretzky responded that he gets motivated just by "knowing that the average NHL player is now 6'2", 200 lbs., and that they all want to take the puck away from me any way they can!"

So Canada's and hockey's superstar seems to be a man of few words. (Guess that might be seen as another similarity? Both let their actions speak for them, as they always say.) But still, Gretzky's said enough to convince you that he definitely recognizes star quality of the same magnitude in Larry Bird. And as they (that famous they, again) always say, it takes one to know one.

1988 NBA Playoffs

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CELTICS CONFIDENTIAL

By Bob Schron

The surprising announcement of **K.C. Jones** on his decision to leave coaching, caught the local press community by surprise... K.C. had openly denied such thoughts in his column in *Celtics Pride* in February of 1987... "I'm extraordinarily happy coaching," he said at that time. Things change over a year's time, although K.C. let his angry feelings be known to *The Quincy Patriot-Ledger's* **Mike Fine** when that writer suggested K.C.'s job might be in jeopardy as the team began playing sluggishly after a 6-1 start this season... Interesting: This is a man who's won over 500 games in the NBA, regular season and playoffs, and two championships and wasn't ever named Coach of the Year?... The genuine class of the man will be continued on the sidelines by **Jimmy Rodgers** and **Chris Ford**... There is a precedent in K.C.'s decision. When he was a player, he retired at age 34, even though many felt he could still play on (He wanted to leave a year earlier than that, but decided to stay when **Bill Russell**, his lifelong friend, became player-coach)... K.C. reached his goals and decided to move on now, to continue his life apart from the coaching role. A man of unbelievable class, heart, dignity, and good will. And a great friend — Good Luck to you **Case** and **Ellen** and **Christopher**.

Chris Ford's All Rookie Team: **Mark Jackson**, NY, **Reggie Miller**, Indiana **Greg "Cadillac" Anderson**, SA, **Horace Grant**, Chicago, and **Mark Acres**, Boston... Ford on problems rookies such as the Nets' **Dennis Hopson** suffered this season: "He had three things working against him. First, he played under three different coaches, and that's a 'killer' to a rookie. Second, he was injured and missed some valuable playing time and coaching. Third, he's learned a new position. I don't think anything is more harmful to a rookie than playing under more than one coach in his rookie year."

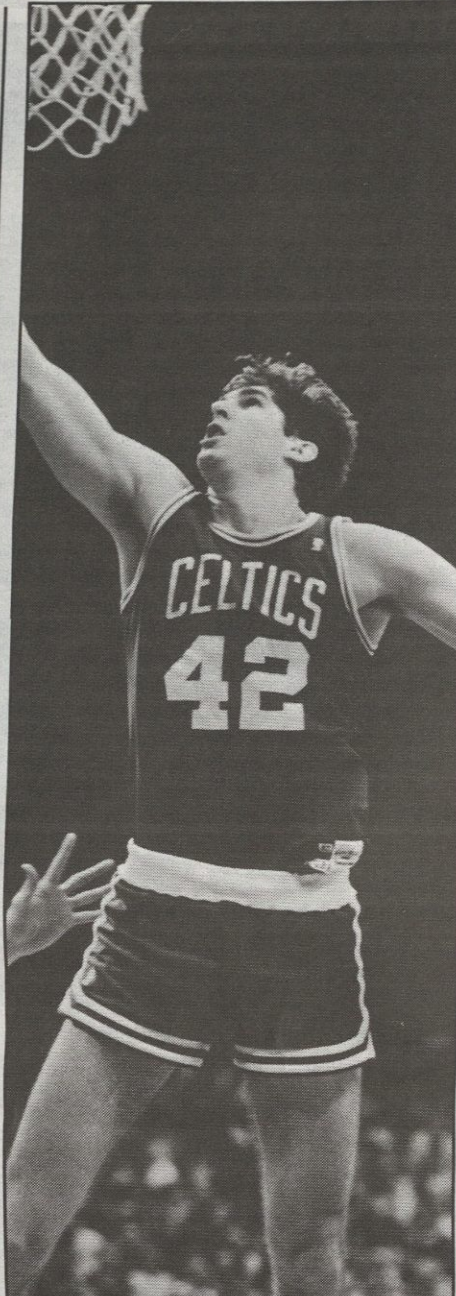
Ford on **Mark Acres**: "We were very impressed with Mark's offensive skills when we had him at the free agent camp last summer. He's been impressive this season for two major reasons. First, he's adapted well to demands of playing on a championship contender. Second, he's shown great defensive skill at all three frontcourt positions, small forward, power forward and center"... The Bulls are extremely pleased with another Celtics alumnus from the Sweet Sixteen championship year, **Sam Vincent**. **Doug Collins**, the Bulls' Coach on Vincent, who played well for Chicago before trailing off a bit in the opening phase of the playoffs: "We're very pleased with Sam, very, very, very pleased. He takes ball-handling pressure off of **Michael Jordan** and he helps us by constantly running the ball up the floor. And I'm happy **Sedale Threatt** has played well for Seattle. (Threatt was the player exchanged for Vincent). When you trade a player to another team and he performs well, it's good because then teams will trade with you again"... The CBS crew of **Dick Stockton**, **Billy Cunningham**, **Michael Berks** and **Sandy Grossman** taped interviews with Celtics players before Game Two of the Eastern Confer-



Bill Walton: Radio Commentary

ence playoff series against New York... Cunningham and Celts' maestro **Red Auerbach** conferred off to the side for several minutes before that taping session... **Jim Karvalas**, the radio voice of the Knicks and a twenty year veteran of the league, on Auerbach: "There is no denying the importance of the man. He's made an imprint on the development of the game and he's a personal thread running throughout the game's history. What is amazing to me is how he remains so competitive for so long"... **Don Nelson**, who will coach the Golden State Warriors next season, was in Boston as a color analyst for TBS for Game One of the Celtics-Knicks series. Nelson told his viewers that night, "Barring injury, the Celtics should win every playoff series they're in"... **Rick Pitino**, Knicks' Coach on his team's season: "We had a very gratifying year. We're glad to be in the playoffs against a team as great as the Celtics. It's a great accomplishment."

Bill Walton remains active on the scene, working hard on rehabilitation and offering radio commentary on the playoffs for WHDH radio in Boston... **John Havlicek** and **Bob Cousy** took in the opening two games of the playoff series against New York... **Dennis John-**



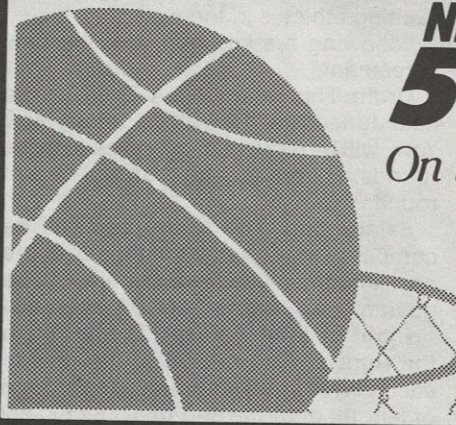
Mark Acres: All-Around Game

son did a public service announcement for the United States Youth Games this summer with **Don Shane** of WBZ-TV in Boston... Rick Pitino on the real problems of defending the Celtics: "**Larry Bird** is a great scorer, but what makes him

and the rest of the team so difficult is that they are such great passers. It makes a typical double-down defense difficult because they pass the ball back outside so quickly and always to the right man."

David Zuccaro, the team's excellent public relations official, reported that he received fifty-one phone calls from the media at his home the night **K.C. Jones** announced his resignation... The Celtics began Jones' lame duck regime inauspiciously, losing Game Three of the playoffs to the Knicks in New York... Stars and celebrities abounded when the Knicks won that third game: **Bill Murray**, **John McEnroe**, **Michael Douglas** and **Bob Dishy** were among the stars who watched that third game... Celtics Public Relations Director **Jeff Twiss** reported that the opening round of the playoffs attracted the largest media aggregation for an opening round in the seven years he has been with the club... Sources say that a major reason **K.C. Jones** announced his resignation was the length of the contract he received from the Celtics in his promotion to the front office... Predictable opposing views concerning the atmosphere of the change were offered by *The Boston Globe's* **Will McDonough** and *The New York Post's* **Peter Vecsey**... Everything would be OK, except the suspicion here is that K.C. still wants to coach... **Ed Badger** has been scouting the NBA since the playoffs began last week... The Celtics utilized the proximity of New York to make the playoff series with the Knicks a two trip affair. The Celtics flew in and out of New York the same day of Games Three and Four, May 4th and 6th... According to **Don Cronson**, the agent for the Knicks' **Mark Jackson**, "the playoffs were something of a learning experience for Mark and the whole Knicks' team. Listen, you have three guys who are probably going to make the Hall of Fame on the Celtics and a veteran unit that has played in playoff after playoff. I just don't think the Knicks match up that well with the Celtics anyway, plus you have the experience factor thrown in." About Jackson: "I think Mark's accomplished a helluva lot this season, even if **Dennis Johnson** is sort of taking him a little bit to school in the playoffs. But DJ does that to a lot of players, rookies and veterans alike."

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Celtics Victorious in First Round Action

In a tightly-contested series, the Celtics came back to beat the Knicks and take the opening round of the playoffs three games to one. This was by no means an easy first-round opponent — the Knicks' pressing defense can ruin the game plans of many a team, and will be a factor in future playoffs. The Celtics though, executed well, and veteran leadership was tapped successfully for the win.

Boston 112 New York 92, Playoff Game One April 29 at Boston Garden

Larry Bird and Kevin McHale each scored 29 to pace the Celtics to a tough 112-92 victory in the opening game of the 1988 Playoffs for the Celtics. The victory gave the Celtics a 1-0 lead in the best-of-five series.

The teams battled evenly through the first quarter with the surprising three-point shooting of Knicks' backup point guard **Sedric Toney** setting a slight lead for the visitors at the quarter, 29-26. This would set the tone for the contest throughout the first thirty-three minutes of the game. There would be ten lead changes and ten ties through the second and third quarter: the Knicks scoring was paced by **Gerald Wilkens's** 19 points and **Patrick Ewing's** 16 points (and 5 blocks) as Bird and McHale carried the Celtics' attack inside with 21 and 19 respectively.

"I though our biggest difficulty," said K.C. Jones, "was we weren't getting back on defense. We had talked about that in practice, and also taking the ball to them on the offensive end. Until **Dennis Johnson** did this in the third quarter, we were in trouble."

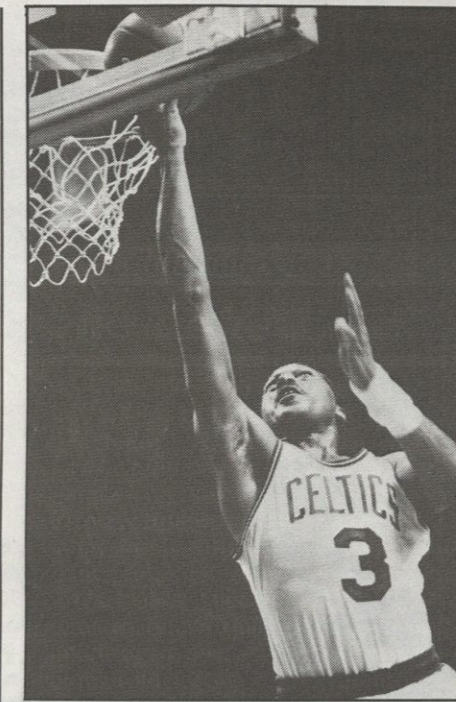
Johnson controlled matters late in the third period, after **Danny Ainge** (a foul-plagued 2-point night) picked up his fourth personal on a double-team on **Ewing** at the 5:12 mark. His end-to-end drive pulled the Cs within 74-73 and then he swarmed the offensive boards to complete a three-point play with McHale to give the Celtics the lead for good. He closed the quarter out with a 24-second buzzer beater and the Celtics led after three 82-75. This spurt began a longer run that would ultimately vanquish New York.

Down the stretch, Boston outdefended the Knicks and used a halfcourt pressing defense to key a 25-5 destruction. The coaches emptied their benches after Boston raced off to a 96-77 advantage with less than five minutes remaining. **Wilkens** led the Knicks with 24 and **Ewing** and **Sidney Green** had 11 rebounds each. Rookie **Mark Jackson** had 9 assists but was held in check. **Robert Parish** had 13 rebounds for Boston and **Johnson** 9 assists and 4 steals. McHale had 5 blocks for the Celtics to tie **Ewing** in that category.

Boston 128 New York 102, Playoff Game Two, May 1 at Boston Garden

The Celtics broke open a close game with a 14-1 second quarter surge and defeated the Knicks in Game Two of the opening round of the Eastern Conference playoffs. Paced again by **Larry Bird's** scoring and using the open court game to its best advantage, Boston

GAME BY GAME



Dennis Johnson: Veteran Force

expanded a first quarter 29-25 lead into a 41-26 margin at 7:50 of the second quarter. This surge featured scoring by six players and it was this smooth, balanced attack that carried Boston all day.

"The trouble with trying to use our press when we're behind," pointed out Knicks' assistant **Stu Jackson**, "is that you can't turn it into an offensive weapon. That's when we've been most effective with our pressing game."

The main villains from New York's perspective were the key ballhandlers, **Bird** and **Dennis Johnson**. By halftime, **Bird** had registered 19 points and 6 assists and **Johnson** 14 and 5. Boston had a 63-48 lead and the Knicks appeared bewildered, saved only by strong play from veterans **Trent Tucker** and **Bill Cartwright**, who each tallied 9.

The unanswered question left was how the Knicks would come out in the all-important initial six minutes of the second half. **Gerald Wilkens** seemed ready, scoring 12 in the period, but the Celtics again had too many weapons. **Bird** tallied 14 in the quarter, including three long outside jumpers — one a 3-pointer — and **Kevin McHale** exploited a season-long weakness underneath to control the offensive rebounding. The Knicks had played better in the third quarter, but the Celtics never allowed the visitors any

closer than a brief 71-58 margin early. The Celtics led 91-72 after three and coasted home.

Bird led all scorers with 36 points. McHale's 12 rebounds included 7 off the offensive boards which tied his regular season high in that category. McHale also blocked 4 shots while **Johnson** led both teams with 9 assists. **Wilkens** paced New York with 24 and **Patrick Ewing** had 18 points, 10 rebounds and 6 steals.

New York 109 Boston 100, Playoff Game Three, May 4 at Madison Square Garden

Johnny Newman, claimed on waivers before the season, scored a career high 34 points to spark the Knicks to a 109-100 comeback victory over the Celtics in Game Three of the opening round of the playoffs. **Newman** started the game in place of **Kenny Walker** and helped create a wild, rushing Knick attack that unsettled and finally brought down the heavily favored Celtics.

Kevin McHale led the Celtics' scoring with 24 points and **Larry Bird** added 20, although **Bird** never got fully on track, shooting 8-22 from the floor. **Bird** did have 12 assists and 8 rebounds.

The game was tense throughout, with the Knicks grabbing an early 22-21 first quarter advantage on strong defense. Boston rallied to knot the game 45-45 at halftime. Although the game was close, the real drama resided in the second half. Coach **Rick Pitino**, who was ejected in Game Two, went to a pressing defense virtually throughout the final half and received strong play from second-year All-Star **Patrick Ewing** and reserve **Pat Cummings**. Boston came out of the dressing room apparently ready to win, running off a 13-5 spurt in the first 4:00 of the third quarter. But the Knicks responded, using a running game over the ensuing eleven minutes to outscore Boston, 33-15. Off-guard **Gerald Wilkens** keyed this surge.

This final 8:24 featured a Celtics' rally as **Dennis Johnson** came off the bench to forge a 94-94 deadlock late in the game. But the Knicks responded: **Ewing** drew **Robert Parish's** 4th and 5th personal fouls, forcing K.C. Jones to use rookie **Mark Acres** against the established center of the Knicks. **Ewing** broke the 94-94 deadlock with two free throws at 1:49 and then rookie **Mark Jackson** intercepted a **Johnson** halfcourt pass off the press for two more **Ewing** FTs. After a McHale miss inside, the Knicks scored off of a furious transition, with **Newman** appropriately getting the tip-in.

Ewing added 31 points and had 10 rebounds and 4 blocks for New York. **Johnson** had 16 of his 18 in the second half and **Parish** paced the Celtic rebounding with 11.

Celtics 102, Knicks 94, May 6 at Madison Square Garden, Game Four.

The Celtics escaped a frenzied Madison Square Garden crowd with a series-ending victory against the Knicks. The victory was the first road win for any Eastern Conference playoff team. New York fans gave the Knicks a final standing ovation for a marvelously-fought season and their playoff showing.

The Knicks did not go down without a fight, scrapping back from a 16-4 early deficit and making the game a close contest throughout. "It was as tough a first-round series as we've had in a very long time," said **Kevin McHale** (20 points). "We needed a big effort to beat them."

Knicks coach **Rick Pitino** said of the game, "The Celtics were not fresh, but they reached back and showed their greatness." The Knicks were led by soon-to-be Rookie of the Year **Mark Jackson**, with 28 points and nine assists and by Game Three's nemesis, **Johnny Newman**, with 25 points. **Patrick Ewing** only shot three for 12 from the field, but pulled down 20 rebounds. The Celtics dominated inside play throughout the game.

The Knicks however, seemed to prepare themselves for a fifth game as late as the fourth quarter. With the Celtics ahead 77-75, the Knicks held Boston scoreless for 3:32, running off eight points of their own, to make it 83-77 with 6:25 left. But Boston bounced back behind **Larry Bird** (28 points) and regained the lead, 84-83 with 5:01 to go.

At this point, the Celtics put together a 19-5 run behind the clutch shooting of **Dennis Johnson** (19 points, 12 assists) and **Larry Bird**. **Danny Ainge's** three-point goal sent the Knicks packing for the summer.

The Knicks kept the game close with their pressing, harassing defense and the emotional fuel supplied by 19,000 fans. At times it looked as though chaos on the court was the order of the day. "That chaos stuff isn't a joke," K.C. Jones said. "It's definitely for real. This was a test and a half for us. If it had gone to a fifth game, anything could have happened."

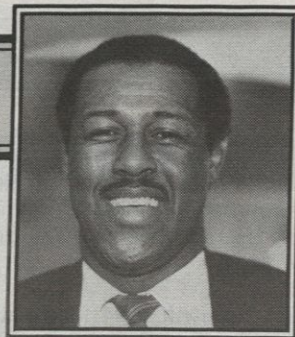
Other Celtics of note: **Robert Parish** 18 points, 12 rebounds, and **Danny Ainge**, who played great defense and shot 5-9 from the field, with one clutch three-pointer, for 11 points.

Boston Celtics Statistics

THROUGH MAY 6 (3-1)

PLAYER	G	QS	MIN	-FIELD GOALS-					3-PT. FG	-FREE THROWS-			--REBOUNDS--			AST	PF	DQ	STL	TO	BLK	PTS	AVG	HI
				F	G	A	P	CT		F	T	A	O	D	TOT									
BIRD	4	4	178	39	81	.481	4	9	31	32	.969	6	17	23	32	8	0	11	12	0	113	28.3	36	
MCMALE	4	4	173	35	56	.625	0	0	27	33	.818	17	21	38	9	14	0	5	13	11	97	24.3	29	
JOHNSON	4	4	154	21	42	.500	2	3	27	31	.871	3	16	19	37	7	0	9	11	1	71	17.8	19	
PARISH	4	4	141	25	54	.463	0	0	4	7	.571	16	30	46	5	12	0	5	8	8	34	13.5	18	
AINGE	4	4	138	15	39	.385	4	13	6	6	1.000	4	5	9	20	12	0	3	4	0	40	10.0	17	
PAYSON	4	0	75	11	24	.458	0	0	9	12	.750	0	4	4	8	7	0	2	5	2	31	7.8	12	
ACRES	4	0	40	4	7	.571	0	0	3	6	.500	3	6	9	0	1	0	1	0	0	11	2.8	4	
LOHAUS	3	0	5	4	4	1.000	0	0	0	0	---	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	2.5	4	
LEWIS	2	0	4	2	4	.500	0	0	1	2	.500	2	1	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	5	1.7	3	
ROBERTS	3	0	16	2	2	1.000	0	0	1	1	1.000	0	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	0	4	1.3	2	
MINNIEFIELD	3	0	14	2	3	.667	0	0	0	0	---	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	1	2	0	4	1.3	2
GILMORE	3	0	22	0	0	---	0	0	0	3	.500	1	7	8	1	3	0	0	3	1	3	1.0	2	
CELTICS	4	4	960	160	316	.506	10	25	112	136	.824	53	110	163	118	80	0	38	60	24	442	110.5	128	
OPPONENTS	4	4	960	153	348	.440	16	47	75	92	.815	54	109	163	102	115	0	33	63	21	397	99.3	109	





AS I SEE IT

By M.L. Carr

Dennis

I was flying down to Guilford College last week. Guilford, where I graduated fifteen years ago. I've entered an entirely different phase of my life since then. I was asked to speak at the Guilford College graduation, and although I always turn these requests down, I accepted this request from my alma mater. The task of the Celtics as they enter the advanced stages of the playoffs and the task of graduates entering a new world, parallel each other because sports does sometimes resemble life. Games and seasons present challenges, goals and finding ways to reach those goals. I think the Boston Celtics of the late 1980s reflect a group determined to reach their goals, able to rise above adversity to go to their limits.

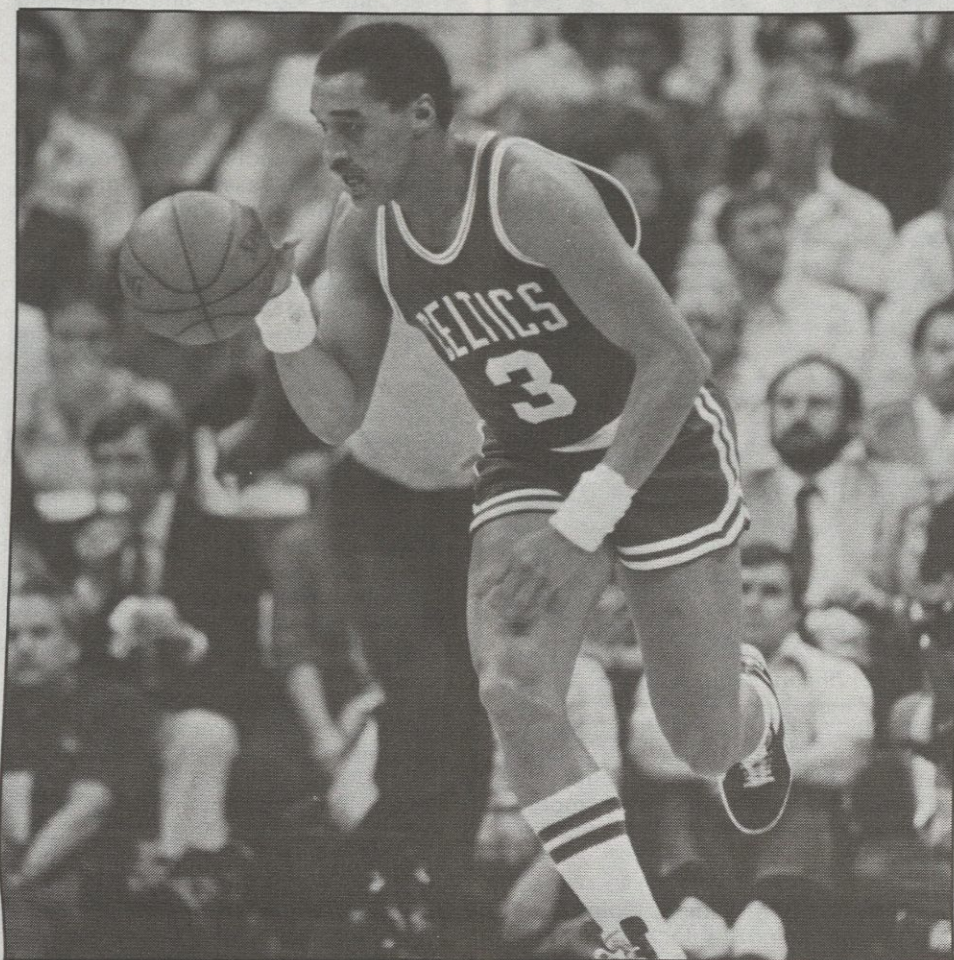
Dennis Johnson symbolizes this effort. I think DJ is the type of player who understands that winners don't make excuses. They makes things happen. He has reached the stage of his career where talent, experience and desire coalesce into a winning combination. In the playoffs, DJ has the ability to make the right decision at crunch time. This was illustrated in the opening series of the playoffs when the Celtics played the New York Knicks.

The Knicks came into the playoffs playing their best basketball of the season. They had brought their game together nicely under Rick Pitino, rallying from last place in the division to finish second and make the playoffs on the last day of the season. The Knicks had accomplished this largely due to their effectiveness with the fullcourt press. They had used the defense to open up the floor and as a result, shooting opportunities for their transition game.

But DJ completely nullified its effectiveness. He is the type of player who might turn the ball over one or two times, but he would lose the ball because he is in the process of analyzing and dissecting the defense.

Against a younger player who would speedily push the ball up the floor, New York's press would work. Against Dennis Johnson, they had little opportunity to succeed. Dennis is like Tiny Archibald in that respect; both players were and are so intelligent that they find a way to beat you at your strength. Patient, controlled and experienced. This accurately portrays Dennis and the rest of the Celtics, especially at this time of the year.

As I flew into North Carolina, I planned my speech to the Guilford graduates. My plan was to discuss persistence, now that they have reached a major goal in the educational process. They have earned qualifications to face issues in our culture, both from a societal and personal perspective. How will the 1988 graduate deal with issues surrounding



Dennis Johnson: Mr. Clutch

an uncertain economy? How will he or she make a contribution to the society and at the same time secure happiness for the themselves? There are threats

from the outside — for example, drugs. How do you effectively combat problems? For the student of today has to be willing, ideally, to succeed and be produc-

tive to his or her satisfaction and then hopefully take it upon themselves to be a role model for the society. We need leadership from our young people. I think of this from a perspective of having left Guilford fifteen years ago and then having entered an entirely new world. I've accomplished a lot and there have been mistakes. The ideal is to keep working as hard as you possibly can to make a contribution.

The success of the Celtics in Boston has been an important contribution to the community and this is something Red Auerbach, Jan Volk and K.C. Jones are proud of. Again, they reached The Finals last year with players such as Kevin McHale playing with a broken foot. This type of courage within the arena was an inspiration to us all.

I read in our magazine a few issues back that Dennis Johnson had considered this season to be "a bad year." Well, I think the same type of nobility is present in DJ that is present in Kevin, Larry Bird and others on the team. I think Dennis' shoulder was really bothering him this year and it wasn't something that he wanted to make excuses about. He just wanted to go on playing. I suspect, knowing DJ, that he has certain expectations about his ability to perform. He won't make excuses. He just loves to be out there playing and helping his team win a championship. I'm not so certain that this is realized enough over the long haul. But in the playoffs, everybody is reminded again.

Much of what Dennis Johnson contributes to the Celtics is subtle and overlooked. But he works extremely hard to maintain a very high performance level. This was something I wanted to remind the students of when I spoke at Guilford. Much of the work we do is done behind the scenes. Ideally, we set high standards for ourselves and work hard to deliver on our own high expectations.

Boston Celtics Caribbean Cruise

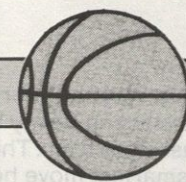
SOVEREIGN OF THE SEAS — AUGUST 27 - SEPTEMBER 3, 1988



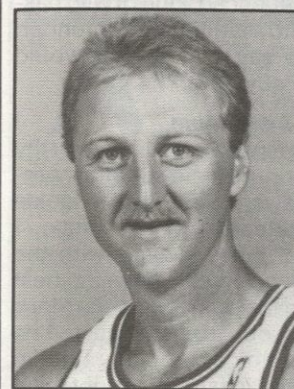
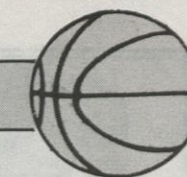
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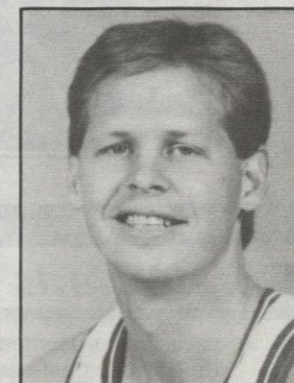


Larry Bird

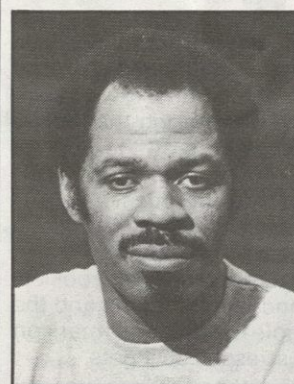
Larry Bird, on the decision of the NBA forcing Robert Parish and Dennis Johnson to travel to Atlanta and Chicago to play the final two games of the regular season because the Hawks and Bulls were contesting the third-best record in the Eastern Conference: "Dennis has had the shoulder problem all year, and Robert was complaining about his knee for a week. They should have been able to take the time off. We worked so hard to get in this position. We busted our butts to accomplish what we did. It's not our fault that these were two TV games. The fans paid for tickets to watch us play three months ago, as well as the final games of the year. If Dennis and Robert get hurt in these games, it's not going to do us any good in the playoffs."

Danny Ainge describes how the Celtics' inside game makes his outside threat that much more dangerous: "If I was defending against the Celtics, I'd let Danny Ainge shoot. I wouldn't let Kevin McHale and Robert Parish shoot. The odds aren't as good — they were 1-2 in the league in shooting percentage.

"When they're posting up and leaving me open, I'm just as confident shooting a 3-pointer as an 18-footer. I have more room and more time to shoot it."



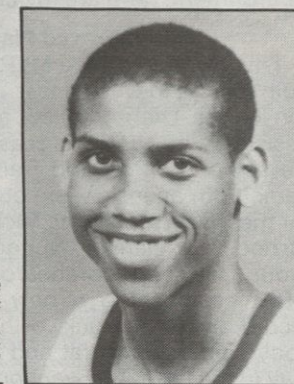
Danny Ainge



Artis Gilmore

Artis Gilmore on the 3-point field goal, a shot that originated when he was playing with the Kentucky Colonels in the American Basketball Association (from 1971-76; Gilmore has two 3-pointers in his career): "The three-point shot was a weapon that opened up the zone defenses. It was very important in the game. The NBA had a separate identity and the three-point shot was a discrepancy as far as the two leagues were concerned."

Reggie Miller, the fine rookie of the Indiana Pacers, broke Larry Bird's rookie three-point record when he sank four three-pointers during the final two weeks of the regular season. Miller on Bird and the record: "Larry Bird is one of the greatest players, if not the greatest player to ever play this game. To get this record, it's great."



Reggie Miller

Celtics Basketball Camp Directory

Here is the list of 1988 Summer Basketball Camps conducted by/affiliated with Boston Celtics personnel:

1st Annual Kevin McHale Basketball Day Camp

WHERE: Ocean Edge Resort (on Cape Code Bay)
One Village Drive, Route 6A
Brewster, MA 02631
DATES: July 11 - July 15
COST: \$200.00
INFO: Kevin McHale Basketball Camp
Ocean Edge Resort
One Village Drive
Route 6A
Brewster, MA 02631
PHONE: 1-800-626-2688 or 1-800-221-1837 or 617-896-2781



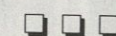
Robert Parish All-Star Basketball Camp

WHERE: New Hampshire College
Manchester, NH 03104
DATES: July 17 - July 22
July 24 - July 29
COST: Resident - \$240.00
Day Camper - \$160.00
INFO: Stan Spirou
99 Ward Street
Manchester, NH 03104
PHONE: 603-645-9604 ext. 2017



28th Annual Red Auerbach Basketball School, Inc.

WHERE: Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
DATES: July 31 - August 5
COST: \$290.00
INFO: Red Auerbach Basketball School, Inc.
P.O. Box 649
Holliston, MA 01746
ATTN: Steve Curley, School Director
PHONE: 617-434-4414



All Pro Basketball School with K.C. Jones and Jerry Sichting

WHERE: Norwich University, Northfield, VT
DATES: August 7 - August 12
COST: Tuition = \$215.00
Day Camp Tuition = \$180.00
INFO: Alex Robinson, General Manager
111 Robin Hill Road
P.O. Box 122
South Chelmsford, MA 01824
PHONE: 617-256-9206

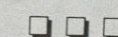


Pro Basketball Legends Camp

WHERE: New England College
Henniker, New Hampshire 03242
DATES: August 17 - August 21
COST: \$1,250.00
INFO: Dick Baker
P.O. Box 59
Swampscott, MA 01907
PHONE: 617-598-1038

20th Annual Don Nelson-Tom Sanders Basketball School

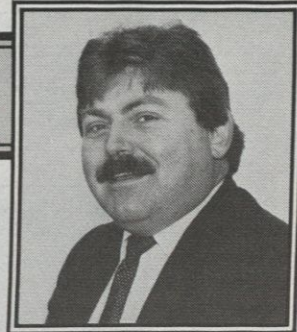
WHERE: New England College
Henniker, New Hampshire 03242
DATES: August 7 - August 13
August 14 - August 20
COST: One week overnight - \$270.00
One week day - \$190.00
One Week Extended day - \$220.00
INFO: Dick Baker
Camp Director
P.O. Box 59
Swampscott, MA 01907
PHONE: 617-598-1038
617-599-3428



16th Annual Dave Cowens Basketball School

WHERE: Regis College, Weston, MA
DATES: July 3 - July 9 (Boys & Girls 10-14 years)
July 10 - July 16 (Boys & Girls 12-18 years)
July 17 - July 23 (Boys & Girls 12-18 years)
July 24 - July 30 (Boys only, 10-14 years)
July 31 - August 6 (Boys only, 10-14 years)
Aug. 7 - Aug. 13 (Boys only, 13-18 years)
COST: Boarder = \$305.00
Commuter = \$280.00
INFO: David W. Cowens Basketball School, Inc.
433 Grove Street
Needham, MA 02192
PHONE: 617-235-0678





CALLING THE GAME

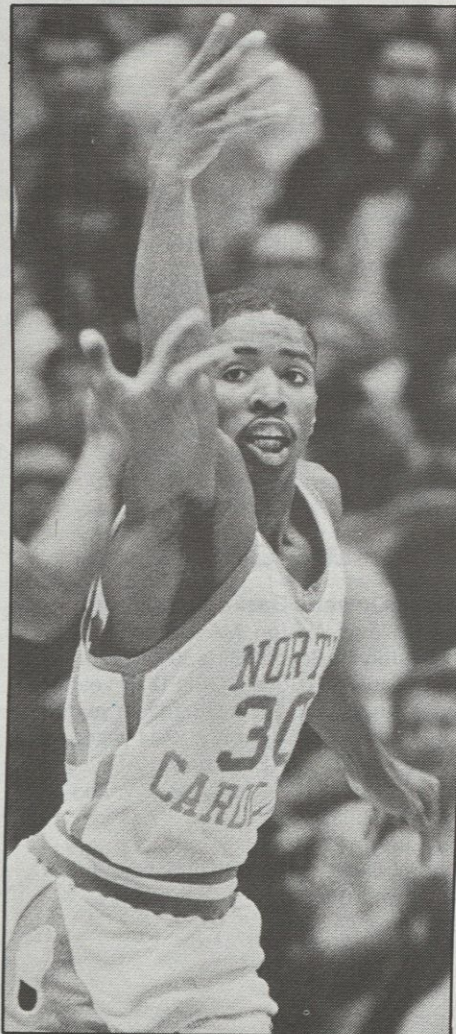
By Glenn Ordway

More Awards

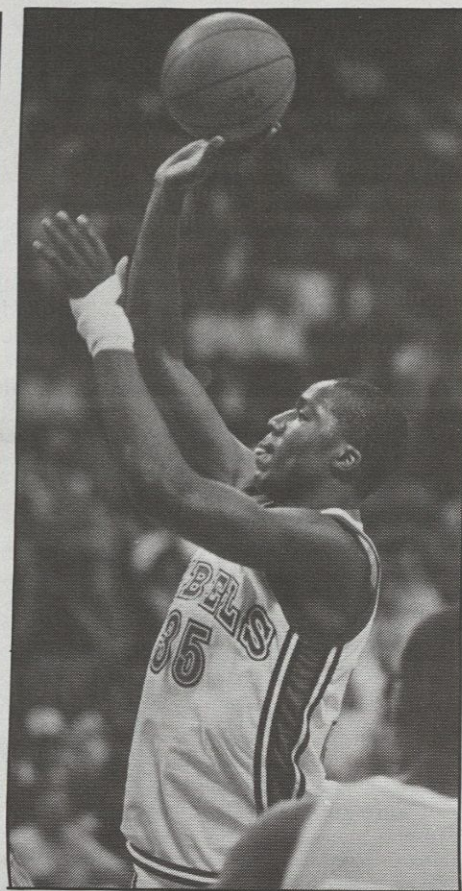
Last issue I presented my case for the various post-season awards in the NBA. There are a few other awards yet to be filled that I want to address in this issue. So for the sake of argument, here are my choices:

Most Improved Player

This award, like the MVP, could be a coin toss as to who wins it. John Stockton of the Utah Jazz set a record for assists in the NBA this season. Jerome Kersey of the Portland Trailblazers became both an inside and outside threat for the Blazers this year. Michael Adams turned the Denver Nuggets offense around the lit up scoreboards across the NBA, establishing a new three-point record, and Kevin Duckworth, who everybody said was too fat and too slow to play in the NBA, but went on to lead the Trailblazers to a 50-plus record season, all these players are worthy of the award. There's probably even a second tier beyond these players in Mark Price of the Cavaliers, Frank Brickowski of the Spurs, and maybe even Brad Daugherty of the Cavs.



Kenny Smith: Wait Till Next Year



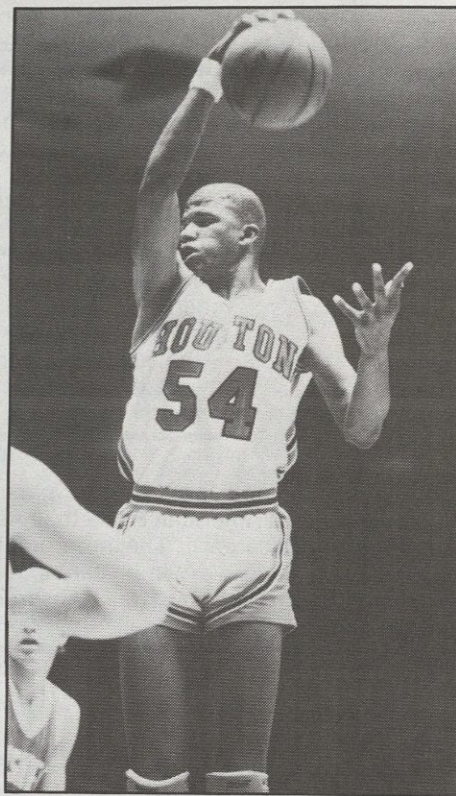
Armon Gilliam: Unfortunate Injury

In other words, it's been a year where a lot of players who were at the middle of the pack emerged as bona-fide stars in the NBA. Due mostly to hard work, and in some cases being at the right place at the right time.

Consequently, this is a real tough category to pick in, but if I was handcuffed to do it, I would have to say John Stockton. Mostly because the point guard spot is a tough position to improve that drastically in, and he's really become just a phenomenal show. To set a record for assists in a season is just a fantastic accomplishment. On this accomplishment alone, I would expect that this guy deserves some kind of award at the end of the season, and based on that premise, this is who I'd give it to, with serious reservations and deferment to the accomplishments of Michael Adams, Jerome Kersey and Kevin Duckworth, who all improved their games significantly.

Executive of the Year

My choice here would be Wayne Embry of the Cleveland Cavaliers. Although no one's really sure if he made the original trades with Philadelphia for the draft pick when they got Daugherty, because Wayne wasn't officially working for the team at the time, sources claim that Embry was right there and making all the decisions even at that time. But even if he didn't, he went out and acquired Dell Curry which gave the club some bench strength at the off-guard spot. This helped especially when Ron Harper was injured. Larry Nance came on a trade with the Suns, and even though he got off to a slow start, he really seems to be doing a number for them right now. Larry Nance has changed the entire make-up of this basketball team — they're a much better team.

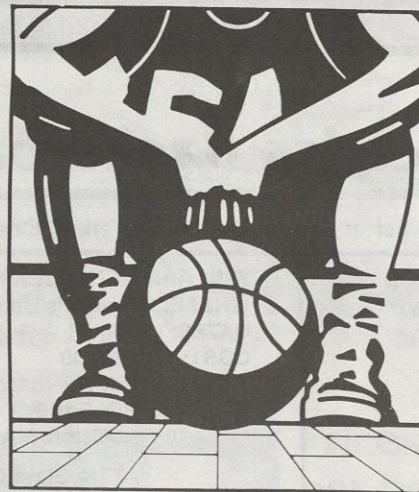


Greg Anderson: Deserves Consideration

The best move Wayne Embry made though, was in selecting Lenny Wilkens to coach that basketball team. This might have been the smartest move he made. Because Lenny is the guy that's molded a young, inexperienced, kind of wild basketball team into a legitimate contender. So I'd have to say that Wayne would have to be the guy here.

Addendum

There are a few other names worthy of consideration in the evaluation processes during awards time. In the Rookie of the Year category of last issue, I mentioned that those rookies with the most playing time usually have the best shot at winning the award, and that Mark Jackson stood out from the rest. The other rookies who contributed mightily to their clubs, and in fairness ought to be considered for this award, are Greg "Cadillac" Anderson of the Spurs, who surprised a lot of people with his abilities; Kenny Smith of Sacramento who, even though injured showed a lot of promise with his quickness and court savvy; and Armon Gilliam of the Suns, who, before he was injured, was tearing the league up with aggressiveness off the boards. There may not be a more difficult transition in life than the difference in performance and lifestyle between the college and pro basketball games. The travel and scheduling is grueling to the rookies, the new demands on their time and the constant struggle to make their mark on the team is as stressful as it gets.



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Knicks Hope This Year's Showers Will Bring Next Year's Flowers

The Cruellest Month

By Jim Rucidlo

"April is the cruelest month..." begins T.S. Eliot in the epic poem *The Wasteland*, words and a title that could be attributed to any Knicks fan. It's doubtful the poet had Gulf and Western's NBA franchise in mind when he penned his masterpiece, but for all intents and purposes, he could have.

A long, cold winter of cynicism and incompetency, spanning three playoff-less NBA seasons, changed into a spring of hope, embodied in youth this April in New York.

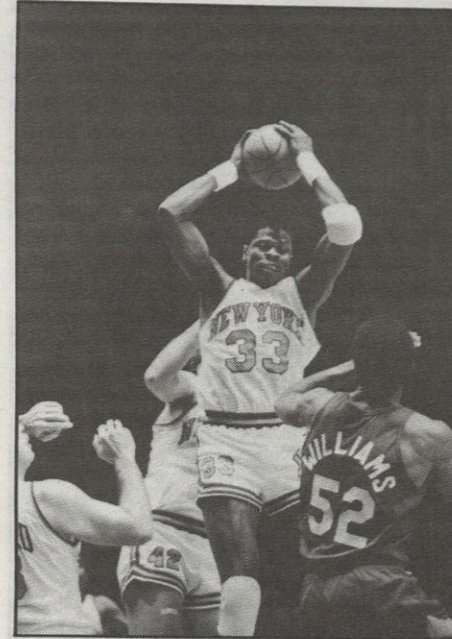
To reach the playoffs for the first time since 1984, the Knicks won six of their last 10 games. Not only win, they did it with exuberance, developing an identity of their own. Last season they were 18-23 at Madison Square Garden, this year they were 29-12.

But the Knicks have found out just how cruel April can be: late-season heroics against has-beens and would-bes was not the same thing as meeting as meeting up with the wily Celtics in the Second Season.

If basketball were war, this series would have been the U.S.A.'s invasion of Grenada. If it were politics, the Knicks were a Republican candidate running for the 8th Congressional District seat.

Nonetheless, Rick Pitino, the ideological mentor, had his troops holding the party line despite the onslaught. "No question our backs are against the wall," said rookie point guard Mark Jackson, "but we are going to Madison Square Garden where we've been tough all year. The Celtics are a great team, but they can be beat."

Jackson never makes it clear if he meant the Celtics could be beaten by the Lakers, but someone with his acute on-court vision had to see it wasn't the Knicks who would be putting the heat on Boston.



Patrick Ewing: Paying Dividends

Following in the same spirit, Bill Cartwright explained, "As a team we have to understand we need to do whatever it takes to win. If that means playing physical, then we have to play physical."

And for second-year forward Ken Walker, the answer was simple. "We didn't play the type of game we needed to play to win. We have to come up with a game plan and stick to it."

Perhaps the Knicks game plan should have included scoring and rebounding by their forwards. New York's starting forwards, Walker and the enigmatic Sidney Green, combined for 24 points and 24 rebounds, while Kevin McHale and Larry Bird registered 110 points and 31 rebounds in the first two games.

Frightening, however, would be a truly competitive New York team. Sports writers from New York came to Boston in hordes, giving this first-round best of

five series coverage worthy of the NBA Finals. A long drought builds such a thirst.

The excitement captured by these writers soon flowed over into the local press. Some believed the New York ingredients of youth and a swarming defense would pose a problem for the "aging" Celtics; the Knicks weren't going to win the series, but they were going to give Boston a run for their money.

Murmurs were heard that even though the Celtics won five of six regular season contests against the Knicks, they had not won any of those games by much more than nine points. It seemed nobody remembered, especially the New York players themselves, that this team compiled a dismal 109-219 (.332) record over the past four seasons.

The most significant indicator of the emergence of the neo-Knicks was seen in the playoff face worn by first-year coach Pitino. Commonly described as intense, the last time New York visited the Garden in early January they lost by nine points and Pitino was not happy.

Unable to conceal his emotions, Pitino's post-game interview on that day was terse and abrupt. But like the team itself, Pitino came a long way this season and this time around he was responsive to the media, occasionally smiling and interjecting humor into the rote answers.

"We've got to learn our lessons from the Boston Celtics, by learning from our shortcomings and learning from their strong points. Trying to stop the Celtics

is one of the most impossible tasks in basketball," the young coach said.

"The great thing for us is for Mark Jackson to go up against DJ, Patrick Ewing to work against Parish, and for some of our power forwards to go up against McHale. It was a great lesson for us. We started five guys with no playoff experience. Next year we'll be one step further than we are now."

This team's core has its roots in the Big East. Pitino (Providence), Ewing (Georgetown), and Jackson (St. John's) have all been schooled in that style of play. Pitino, upon his arrival, has tried to combine the best of each that these schools has to offer: the run-and-gun 3-point offense of Providence, the tenacious and physical defense of Georgetown, and the inside-out game of St. John's.

Although the Knicks are described as a young team, they exhibited a subtle maturity in the locker room that hasn't been visible for the past three years. Ironically, Jackson, the youngest of the lot, seems to be the stabilizing influence, relieving Ewing of some of the media pressure he's faced since arriving in the NBA.

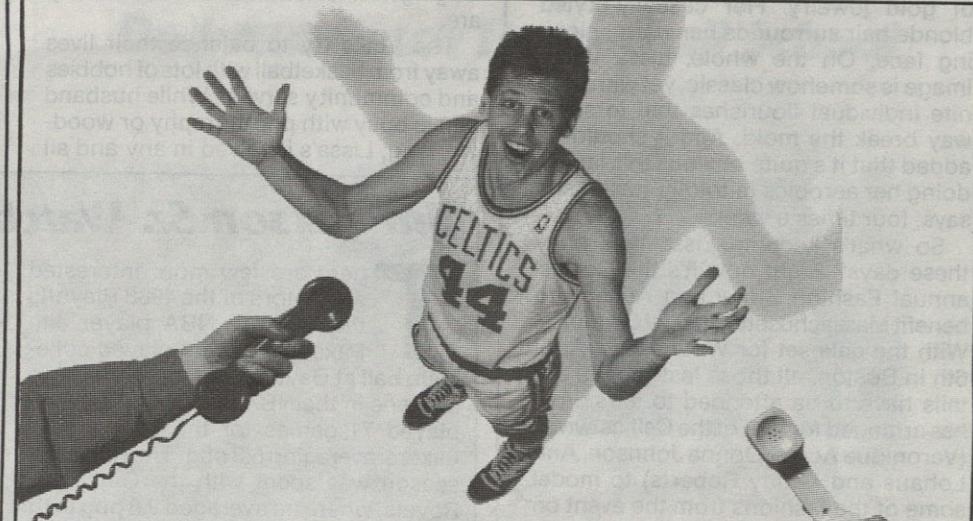
"We learned from this loss," the rookie point guard said, "We learned we have to play consistently for 48 minutes against a team as good as Boston." Yes, these young New Yorkers learned that April is the cruelest month, but somewhere down the road they will be the team tormenting its opponents.

Garden Employees Salute Bird



Larry Bird and Frank Bittorie

Boston Garden head electrician, Frank Bittorie took a moment recently to present Larry Bird with a plaque made from a piece of the parquet floor. The inscription reads "This is a part of the floor you won't have to 'travel' on again."



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Lissa Volk's Active Lifestyle

Busy Days

By Jan Wrotnowski

In speaking with Lissa Volk, wife of Celtics' General Manager Jan Volk, you immediately sense that home and family are at the center of her very satisfying life. In one way or another, her many and varied activities all seem geared to the nurture, protection, preservation and support of her family; that is, both her own immediate family and her extended Celtics family. Her strongly-held values and her sense of tradition are her major motivators. At every moment, Mrs. Volk's love for, and loyalty to, her families is clearly and undeniably evident.

When Lissa Volk enters a room, three things strike you about her: first, her physical attractiveness, second her natural grace and charm, and third, her sincere desire to make everyone in her presence feel comfortable and at ease (and that last one is certainly a blessing when you're a new kid in town). Today as she works her way through the Celtics' administrative offices to our small meeting room, you observe her ready smile and hear her personalized comments for each and every individual she encounters en route. Lissa Volk surely makes a perfect hostess.

Today, as usual, she looks lovely. She's dressed in a black sweater accented with a white organically swirled design framing the V-neck and shoulders, with a pure white blouse underneath, coupled with a slim black, shorter-length skirt. Her outfit is complemented by touches of gold jewelry. Her casually-styled blonde hair surrounds her warm, glowing face. On the whole, Lissa Volk's image is somehow classic, yet with definite individual flourishes that in some way break the mold. And it should be added that it's quite obvious this lady is doing her aerobics faithfully, just as she says, four times a week.

So what's keeping Lissa Volk busy these days? Right now it's the Celtics' annual Fashion Show and Auction to benefit Massachusetts Special Olympics. With the gala set for Wednesday, April 6th in Boston, all those last-minute details have to be attended to. Mrs. Volk has arranged for four of the Celtics' wives (Veronique Acres, Donna Johnson, Ann Lohaus and Penny Roberts) to model some of the fashions from the event on *Good Day!* (a local TV talk show), the day before. And she's hoping she can persuade the dynamic Nancy Parish to sing. (Nancy's been busy in the studio, writing and recording for the last few months.) And of course, she has to make sure all the guys are fitted for their tuxedos. It's a lot of work, but it's worth it when you know your efforts can make even a small difference in the lives of others. This kind of work is a natural for Lissa Volk.

But Lissa Volk is not just another pretty face (in case you didn't already realize that by now). She has a B.A. in sociology and a Masters in Reading and Curriculum Planning from Boston University. She taught sixth grade in an open classroom setting in Sudbury, Massachusetts for six years prior to beginning her family. And for the last twelve years or so she's concentrated her efforts on being a full-time wife and mother, mother to Shari



Lissa Volk: Wife of Celtics GM

(12 in June) and Matthew (7). But just because she's been working inside the home all these years doesn't mean she's been sitting around twiddling her thumbs. (Now really, does any full-time mom ever get to sit down for very long?) No, Lissa Volk is out there, active and involved, enjoying life and giving back as much as she can, always acknowledging how fortunate she and her family are.

The Volks try to balance their lives away from basketball with lots of hobbies and community service. While husband Jan is busy with photography or wood-working, Lissa's involved in any and all

arts and crafts activities (sewing, soft sculpture, knitting, etc.). Both enjoy sports. Besides her aerobics, Mrs. Volk expresses a desire to pick up tennis again. Also now Mr. Volk wants her to play squash. And in their community of Wayland, the Volks, committed and devoted parents that they are, continue to offer their time in a variety of ways to their children's schools.

Yet when you're members of the Celtics family, basketball is always a major presence in your life. But that doesn't bother Lissa Volk one bit. She says she's always been a fan. In fact she relates that from her high school days at Newton

(Massachusetts) South, she always dated guys who played the game. So it's just fine with her if her husband has to bring some of his work home with him occasionally. She loves the game and the Celtics too, and she'll talk basketball any time.

How did Lissa and Jan Volk meet? Lissa recalls that a close girlfriend of hers had been dating one of Jan's college friends, and she then fixed up Lissa with Jan. Mrs. Volk had been aware of Mr. Volk since her camp days, but somehow she never really knew him till her match-making friend brought them together.

What first attracted her to her husband? Right away she responds that he was "different from so many of the other guys out there. He was down-to-earth, understanding and sensitive." And of course, they've always shared a lot of interests and subscribed to the same basic values, making for an excellent match.

What would Mrs. Volk say are the keys to the success of their marriage? She feels they just "understand each other." They communicate very well. They have interests that mesh well, yet they give each other enough time and space to be their own persons. Plus they spend a lot of time together in Celtics-related activities during the season, and they set aside much of the summer for shared experiences with their children. Their families both live in the area, (though the Volks spend winters in Florida now), offering a loving extended family situation.

When asked about her personal goals, Lissa Volk responds that she does miss being in the classroom. And if she could find the right part-time position in education, she would return. But she loves being a part of the Celtics so much that she doesn't want to restrict her time too much with a full-time situation. Otherwise, in the future she feels she may expand her interest in arts and crafts into the field of interior decoration.

Finally we concluded our conversation with this last Barbara Walters-style question: If a fairy godmother offered you three wishes, what would you ask for? Lissa Volk's answer once again points up her devotion to family. First she'd ask for the "health of my family," and second "for my husband to continue to be happy and satisfied in his work," and third? Well, all Mrs. Volk could say is that she's just so satisfied with her life, she really doesn't have any other wishes. She's just thankful for all her blessings.

No, Lissa Volk's name doesn't appear in any listing of the Celtics' front office personnel. Yet having met Mrs. Volk, you know she's just as much a part of the organization as any other officially titled Celtics family member. Possessing a long list of applicable skills and personal qualities, obviously she would be quite comfortable assisting in Public Relations or Marketing and Communications, or in almost any other function for the Celtics. Anyone can see that the Celtics are lucky to have Lissa Volk as their representative, unofficial or otherwise.

And when you observe Lissa and Jan Volk side-by-side, talking quietly together or cheering the team on at the Garden, you just know that Lissa Volk is the perfect partner for the General Manager of the Boston Celtics.

Jim Paxson Sr. Watches Two Sons in NBA

There are few more interested spectators of the 1988 Playoffs than former NBA player Jim Paxson, Sr., who played collegiate ball at Dayton, and performed two seasons in the NBA. In 1956-57 Paxson played 71 games for the Minneapolis Lakers, averaging 6.3 ppg. The following season was spent with the Cincinnati Royals, where he averaged 9.8 ppg in 67 contests.

After retiring from the game, he went into the insurance business in Dayton. Now, the proud father of two sons in the NBA has spent the past several weeks following Jim Paxson (Jr.) in Boston and his younger son, John, who is a fine off-guard for the Chicago Bulls.

"I was in Chicago the final day of the regular season," Paxson, Sr. recalled last week in Boston, where he watched the first two games of the opening round between the Celtics and the Knicks. "It wasn't easy — two teams, Boston and Chicago, each with one of my sons in the game."

"I was very pleased with Jim being traded from the Trail Blazers to the Celtics. He had been such an integral part of the Trail Blazers for so long — then, he was being phased out of that system. To have been traded to the Celtics, well, to me that was an ideal

situation. "Jim had called me a month before the deal actually went through and told me there was a possibility in it. Then, he thought it wasn't going to be worked out."

"I am totally impressed with the atmosphere around the Celtics. The practice tells it all. These guys are very competitive, but they're also loose. I've watched a lot of teams practice, and you just don't see that combination. It's an ideal practice situation; the playoffs are so competitive and tense that I think you have to have a proper balance. The games themselves mean so much... on the morning of a playoff game, the Celtics are very relaxed. That says a great deal about their poise."

The Celtics did indeed win that night, 112-92 over the young New York Knicks. "I don't know how many fathers are able to say they have two sons who play in the NBA. And one, Jim, plays with Larry Bird, and the other, John, plays with Michael Jordan."

After a weekend in Boston, Mr. Paxson was off to Cleveland where the Bulls were the visitors in their opening round against the Cleveland Cavs. "Tell 'em, Dad," Jim Jr. joked as the two left Hellenic College. "That's what you do for a living, watch your sons play NBA basketball."

NBA Admits: Hands are Quicker than Eyes
Three Referees?

David Stern: Help is on the Way

The National Basketball Association Board of Governors has voted to institute a three-referee officiating system beginning with the 1988-89 season. The move to three officials had been recommended by the Competition Committee and was approved by the Board of Governors at its meeting in New York on April 26th. The NBA used three officials during the 1978-79 season, but has used two-man crews before and since.

"Adding a third referee should help maintain better control over play," commented Commissioner David Stern, "and nothing is as important as ensuring a proper framework in which the players can play at their best."

"I don't think there's any doubt that the third referee will help us — and the game," commented referee Hue Hollins, who worked the second game of the opening round of the playoffs between the Celtics and the New York Knicks, May 1. "There is just so much a third referee can do to help; covering the floor will be much more workable, getting an accurate view of the play underneath will be attainable, and being able to see a play accurately from sideline to sideline will now be something we can achieve."

"Conditioning and keeping up with the athletes are vital parts of getting the job done," commented Hollins, who had refereed this end-to-end contest and was returning home to Los Angeles for three days before going out on his next assignment.

"I think there was a problem back in 1979, though," offered Bob Cousy, who played for twelve seasons, earning Hall of Fame status. Cousy is now a color analyst of Celtics games for WLVI-TV in

Boston. "I think there's always the potential for a problem when officials are trying to reach consensus on a call. With a third man doing the job, there's an extra ego involved, and I'm not so sure it will work all that well."

The Competition Committee officially cited several reasons for recommending a third official be added to the officiating team. The benefits were, in addition to the points stressed by Hollins, a lessening of the probability of violent acts

because of the presence of an additional official; easing the strain on older officials, thus perhaps prolonging the careers of the NBA's most experienced referees; and providing younger officials a better chance to succeed by lessening their responsibility, since they would be working with two partners instead of one.

Another consideration: The NBA will need 15 new officials next season with the addition of the third member to the team, plus two more. This is necessitated by the entrance of Charlotte and Miami to the league next season.

"I think the idea will work out," commented Celtic Dirk Minniefield. "I think what's happened is that the league has become more and more of a transition game. I think you have guys running more and the transition between offense and defense happens so quickly that an added guy has to help."

"What might hurt is if referees begin making too many calls. Then the game is slowed down, you're taking too many free throws, and you don't know why you've won or lost. Was it because of the referees? The advantage this time over the last (in 1978-89) is that the game of basketball itself has had more experience with three referees, since most college conferences have used three officials since the early eighties."

According to the NBA, in 1978-89, when the league did use the three officials, an average of 50.6 fouls per game were called and games averaged 2:02 in length. These numbers, according to the league, are very much in line with the surrounding years, when there were two officials: in 1977-78 there were 50.3 fouls and games lasted 2:04, in 1979-80 there were 48.7 fouls and games lasted 2:03.

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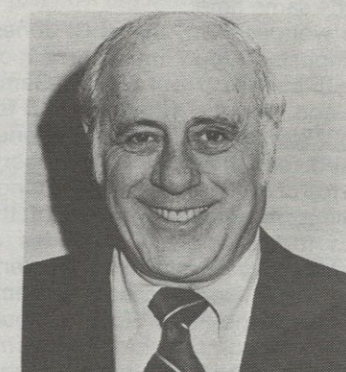
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THE BEST DAY THEY EVER HAD

K.C. Jones' Most Important Coaching Victory

The 1984 Finals clash between the Los Angeles Lakers and the Boston Celtics established the beginnings of a rivalry that captured the imagination of the entire American culture. All of the elements of grand theater were at hand. The sterling of competitors, Los Angeles and Boston, from two of the country's finest cosmopolitan centers, were thrust onto the national stage, courtesy of CBS. The Series' final game would attract the largest television audience in the history of professional basketball, a Neilson rating of 19.3 and over forty million viewers. The drama between the teams offered sharply defined images in conflict — Los Angeles' glamor versus old Bostonian tradition, the newly established basketball dominance of the Lakers against the storied Banner of Celtics Pride. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar of the Lakers, thought by most everyone to be the best center in the game's history — except by Bostonians, who understood Bill Russell's profound influence upon every game in the sport in his thirteen-year career. Finally, there was the clash between the two most significant players in the modern game, Larry Bird and Magic Johnson. Two men, white and black, who, at 6'9", could do everything on the basketball court. Their dual entrance to the professional game in 1979 altered the course of the game forever, because they ushered in an era where virtually every player on the court could perform every skill and play above the rim at the same time.

Little wonder then, that K.C. Jones' most important coaching victory took place in this series. It took place in Game Seven, and won the championship for Boston. "You forget the details," Jones remarked recently, "but I remember I was on top of every move, all game long." The climax of the best series of the eighties further elevated a series of memorable plays, fights, execution and surprise. "The Lakers had the best talent," Jones said at the time. What he would never say — and never has — was that the Lakers had the best team. It was that central idea of *team* which allowed the Celtics to edge out Los Angeles, because in order to avert a Lakers' sweep, Boston needed an all-out effort by supporting actor Gerald Henderson in Game Two to even give the Celts a chance. Game One went to the Lakers in Boston, as L.A. came off the plane from a sixth game win in Phoenix two nights before, and ran Boston off the parquet, 115-109. Then in Game Two, after the teams battled through forty-eight minutes with the Celtics controlling a slight lead throughout, Los Angeles rallied to take a 113-111 lead with 15 seconds left. Kevin McHale had missed two free throws which would have tied it, and the Lakers had possession and the lead; they appeared to be certain victors. Suddenly, in a flurry of motion, Henderson swiped a shaky crosscourt pass from James Worthy and soared in for a game-tying layup! Boston, with new life, would never look back for the rest of the series. Scott Wedman clinched an exciting OT win, and the war had begun in earnest.



K.C. Jones: Defeated Critics

Game Three: Earvin Johnson powered the Lakers to a crushing 137-104 win. Game Four: Jones moved Dennis Johnson onto Magic, and behind Bird, McHale, Robert Parish and Johnson (22 points, 14 assists) and a memorable steal by M.L. Carr, the Celtics regained the home-court advantage with a 129-125 win in The Forum. In that game there was a series of fights — McHale and Kurt Rambis, Bird and Abdul-Jabbar. War.

Game Five: Boston, 121-103 in one of Bird's best playoff-shooting shows. Game Six: Back at The Forum, Los Angeles dispelled any suspicions about lack of heart by rallying from an 82-73 deficit late, to win going away, behind Abdul-Jabbar's 30 points. The climax of the series was set — K.C. Jones' greatest coaching victory.

Game Seven proved to be tense, and largely dominated by the Celtics. The Lakers approached the game mysteriously sullen. They sat in their locker room before the game in darkness, avoiding the heat and seemingly wishing the task at hand would disappear. As they paraded from their locker room, Carr stood in the hallway, taunting them, claiming they would never win *this* game in Boston. In the tension of the moment, Jones was sky-high, seeing an opportunity to defeat his detractors of this year — and years past.

"I felt a real obligation to win that year. Red Auerbach had gone out on a limb to hire me. We had a new coaching staff, and from the beginning, I felt we never really got the respect we deserved. I remember losing four games in a row, early (making their early-season mark 9-5); the boo-birds were standing-room-only then. Normally in a coach's first season, you don't get to The Finals. And this was a team that had been swept by the Milwaukee Bucks in 1983, the first time that had ever happened to the Celtics."

Game Seven broke even early, each team scoring 30 in the opening quarter.

Garden became a force in the game, taunting the Lakers with all of its eighties verve.

Jones had unconsciously evoked this feeling by using the physical Carr as his first sub off the bench this night, indicating both to the Lakers and his team that the Seventh Game was for keeps. Boston then surged late in the third period behind Bird and McHale to grab a 92-77 lead as the game entered its final pandemonium-laden stage.

The Lakers would close to within three points twice (105-102, 108-105) in the final minute, but each time the Celtics erected a barrier. A now-familiar scene rebuffed one charge: Dennis Johnson stole a pass from Magic and broke full-speed for the goal, a thoroughbred in full charge. He tallied two free throws. Then Parish stole a possession, and the Celtics had sealed the win.

"A monkey was off our backs," said Jones. "We had defeated all of the critics. *Sports Illustrated* had a mound of copy and photographs to highlight a sensational L.A. victory. They only had a thin ream of copy about us, but we had pulled together to take that series. It was a joyful win for me. I felt that I had really contributed to what the Celtics were about and had also validated Red Auerbach's confidence in me. I was extremely proud of our ball club."

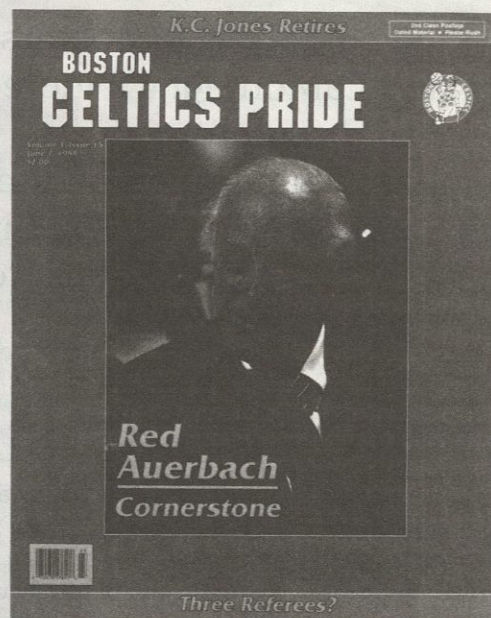
Then Jones sent Danny Ainge — then a seldom-used bench player — into the game, in turn keying up Cedric Maxwell, who overwhelmed the outstanding young Worthy in this contest. Gradually, the

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What You Read and See are Very Different in the NBA

Relative Heights



Bill Walton: Larger than Life

Spud Webb, the mercurial point guard of the Atlanta Hawks, took a moment last week to consider how he's influenced the game. Webb was originally regarded as something of a freak because, at 5'7", he was at first thought to be far too small to be able to cope with players in the professional game.

"You learn," he said, "to find ways around obstacles. You learn to go through picks and open spaces. Some of the best players in the league are smaller — players such as Mark Jackson, Isiah Thomas. Players such as Tyrone Bogues have come into the league and proved they can be effective. It's not how tall you are, it's how big you play."

Spud Webb has travelled the gamut in his playing career, not only on the court, but on the measuring charts as well. When Webb was striving to make the grade as a collegiate player in junior college (Midland, TX) and under Jimmy Valvano at NC State, he was always promoted as 5'7", but on other occasions he was listed as 5'4" because that diminutive size has gate appeal. "A curiosity factor," shrugged Webb.

Heights have a way of affecting the performance of a player. The Celtics' Bill Walton camouflaged his size. He just did not want to be thought of as a seven-foot eccentric. He was a powerful player, one of the best in the game at deflecting shot attempts and taking up space underneath. During healthier years, Walton would annually be among the best in the game on the offensive rebounds. What was deceptive was that Walton dominated inside not only because of his great timing, but also because he was bigger and stronger than most of his opponents in the paint. Walton's not-so-well-kept secret was let out when he posed for team photos in Boston from 1986-88. He

was bigger than Robert Parish, a bona fide seven-footer. This season he stood head and shoulders over Brad Lohaus.

Walton took mild offense initially at the suggestion that he might be more than 6'11", but now the Redhead smiles at the discrepancy between this listing early in his career and his actual height, which is closer to 7'2". It's a smile which reads, "gives them something else to think about."

Then there are the cases of youthful giants on the way up, younger and younger. Artis Gilmore was one of the most ballyhooed collegiate stars ever to come out of the juno ranks — from Gardner-Webb JC in North Carolina and then Jacksonville University. "They would promote me as anything from seven-foot to seven-foot-four," commented Gilmore recently. "Joe Williams, my coach at Jack-

sonville, needed to promote the program aggressively. I would walk into the arena and see that, even though we had an outstanding young team, the place would be half-full. That's when Joe got the idea he'd better start selling."

"We had a player on the wing, a guy who played here, (in Boston), Rex Morgan. Since another player, Pembroke Burrows, and I were both approximately seven feet, we became seven feet. We were advertised as 'Batman' (for my ability to block shots, i.e., bat them away) and Rex was called 'Robin', after the comic strip characters. We played flashier, somehow, after that."

Ed Badger, the Celtics superscout, muses about being totally prepared for anything during rookie and free agent camp. "That goes back to my days at the University of Cincinnati (where Badger was head coach). You'd receive notices about players — their great feats in school, and their heights and weights. But after a few years in this business, I think you walk into the gym prepared to see any and everything. What I did was make sure I had a roster handy so that I'd have a general idea of how to match up the name and the player, because sometimes there were some real differences."

It filters down, younger and younger, to the sons of men who play the pivot. Ernie Grunfeld, the former Knick who now broadcasts the Knicks games over WNBC Radio, was in town recently to cover the Celtics-Knicks playoffs. He told a story about a former teammate, Marvin Webster. "I couldn't believe it," Grunfeld said. "Marvin and his son go into a restaurant, and this will give you an idea of just how big Marvin's son is, (Webster is a seven-footer). Marvin's son isn't even three years old yet, right? So they walk into the restaurant and the waiter hands Marvin's son a menu!"

Red on Scouting

Red Auerbach is the man who invented the NBA fast break and the Sixth Man. So when he discusses some of his maxims on scouting, on good young players and on keys to winning in the playoffs, his words do indeed mean a lot.

"I think there are certain qualities you look for when you're scouting young players. One, does the player want the ball in crunch time? That's hard. Second, the player has to have presence on the floor. Third is the ability to find a way to win. Fourth, determination. Fifth, concentration on the game. Sixth, you can't judge a player on just one scouting trip. You should see him more than one time. Finally, television is a helpful and convenient tool and it's made scouting more inexpensive and more convenient. But you'd better not rely too heavily on it."

Some of Auerbach's highly rated young players:

- Mark Jackson, New York Knicks
- Danny Manning, UKansas
- Charles Smith, Pittsburgh
- Hersey Hawkins, Bradley
- Rik Smits, Marist
- Patrick Ewing, New York Knicks
- Brad Daugherty, Cleveland Cavs
- Ron Harper Cleveland Cavs
- Brad Lohaus, Boston Celtics
- Reggie Lewis, Boston Celtics

What are the secrets of success in winning the playoffs, the item which is a priority on every NBA person's mind this time of year? "I don't think there are 'secrets,'" he says. "I think you have to take the best care you can of the basketball in the playoffs. The games are obviously more intense now, so you have to be ready to create intensity for your own ballclub and sufficiently match the other team's position. Value the ball more — make your plays count and play strong, solid position basketball underneath both boards. Finally, do what got you there. If your team had success doing certain things during the regular season, there's no reason to make any changes now."

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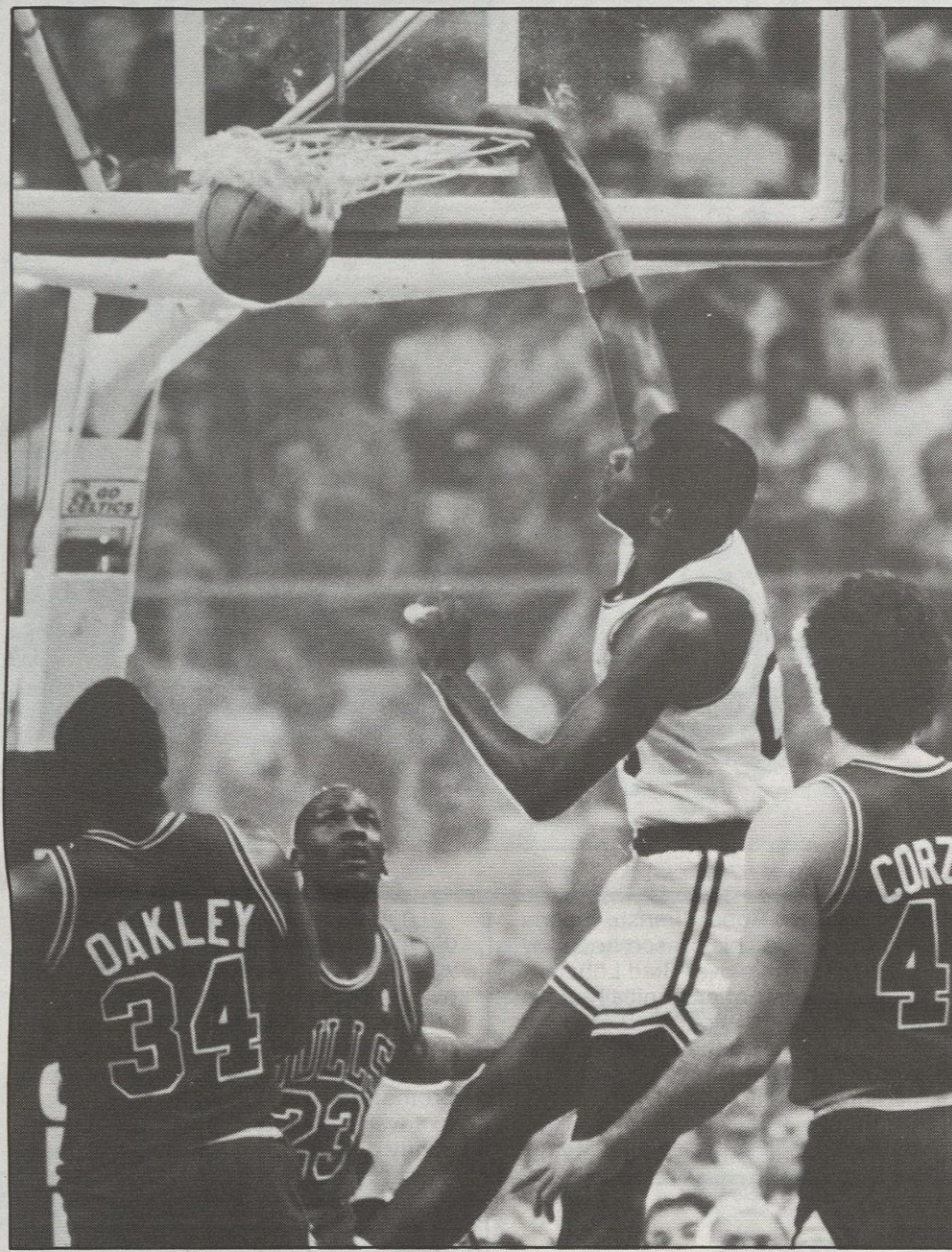
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CELTICS MOSTS

Longest Home Winning Streak in Playoff History

The Celtics' overpowering success at home in recent years—which peaked in their "Sweet Sixteen" championship in 1985-86—forms the foundation for the team's entrance into the NBA record book. The Celtics hold the longest winning streak on their home floor in the playoffs, 14 consecutive wins, from the beginning of the 1986 playoffs and continuing through to last season, when they were finally defeated by the Milwaukee Bucks during a seven-game series. This record provides perspective on the team's performance this season. At the beginning, the Celtics dominated at home as they were on their way to a championship. Boston climaxed a 67-15 regular season and 15-3 playoff performance with a championship victory over the Houston Rockets. Last season Boston was limping badly. They gamely battled their way into The Finals for the fourth consecutive season (59-23 RS; 13-10 PL) but they were unable to defend their championship against the Lakers. Along the way, they were defeated by Milwaukee in Boston, and later they surrendered to the Lakers at the Garden, 107-106.

Boston had been building up to the type of spectacular season they enjoyed in 1985-86 over a six-year span. Beginning with the arrival of Larry Bird, Red Auerbach, Jan Volk and Jimmy Rodgers constructed a team that originally had mobile big people (Bird, Kevin McHale, Robert Parish, Cedric Maxwell and Bill Walton). Later, ideal complementary types were brought in, including Tiny Archibald and Dennis Johnson at point guard, and other great perimeter players with versatility: Gerald Henderson, Quinn Buckner, Scott Wedman, and finally Danny Ainge. With the full emergence of Ainge in 1985 and the All-Star caliber play of McHale, the Celtics loomed powerful in 1985-86. Bill Walton's health was a major question mark as that season started, but Walton conquered his career-long injury hex that year. Walton had previously played on a Portland Trail Blazer team that had won 47 straight games at home; now, off the pines as the Sixth Man on a team that had historically created such a prominent role for the bench, the Redhead provided impetus for the best home



Robert Parish: Runs that Floor

performance ever for an NBA team. The Celtics compiled a 50-1 mark at home that season, including ten consecutive wins in all of the playoff series. Included in the streak then were ten victories that contributed to Playoff Mosts. Some

first eight was injured. McHale had a broken foot, Parish a severely sprained ankle, Bird a bad back, Johnson an injured shoulder, Ainge a severely sprained knee, and so on. Sustained by a fanatical following in the Garden, the Celtics continued their brave attempt to win it all again.

They won the Eastern Conference title on the final day of the regular season by defeating the Hawks in Boston. The Celtics had been defeated by Washington in Hartford in December of 1986 and a week later they would lose to the Lakers in the Garden, but that would be all. They went into the playoffs last season with a 39-2 home record, and continued their playoff home winning streak with two more wins over the Bulls. However, these contests were extremely physical. The Celtics, shaken physically, couldn't outrun the eighth-place finishers in the conference. Boston swept the three-game series from the Bulls, but lost McHale for the start of the ensuing Bucks set a week later. Boston would win Games One and Two against Milwaukee in Boston, to increase the home playoff streak to 14. This would be its stopping point. After a pair of games in Milwaukee that were exceedingly exciting and difficult (Game Three had one overtime, and the Celtics emerged from the visit to The Mecca with a three games to one lead after a double-overtime victory in Game Four). The Celtics returned to Boston for Game Five.

Milwaukee would lead throughout, paced by Sidney Moncrief and a running game. The Celtics rallied as Robert Parish (30 points, 16 rebounds) soared into the lane to cut the Bucks' lead to 121-120. But Parish had suffered a severely sprained ankle and in the end, the Bucks pulled away. The winning streak had come to an end and so had a facet of the Celtics' invulnerability.

Boston battled on into The Finals as issues simple and complex were played out on the perimeter. Was Jones using his bench enough? Should the badly-injured players be playing at all? The fight for survival was being enacted on and off the floor (Johnson had even been rumored to be involved in the infamous Phoenix case, a charge never verified and later dismissed as pure rumor). Boston won a stirring series over the Bucks and won again over Detroit, but the latter series continued this uneasy playoff season: Parish and Bird each fought with Bill Laimbeer and Isiah Thomas, and Dennis Rodman berated Bird after the series ended. Worse, Detroit routed the Celtics in Detroit, 145-118, an infamous record for the Celtics in the category of Points Allowed.

The symbolic and actual end of the season really came in Game Four of The Finals against the Lakers. L.A. rallied from an 85-69 deficit to win in the final seconds, as Magic Johnson's sweeping hook in the lane successfully answered Bird's corner three-pointer immediately preceding it. That last Magic shot concluded an uncharacteristic lapse by the Celtics starters: the final two minutes were replete with unforced turnovers from the veteran five. Jones had little confidence in his bench, and the starters yielded to mental fatigue.

1985-86 playoff home highlights:

- Two wins over Chicago, staving off Michael Jordan, who scored 49 and a record 63 points in two games in Boston;
- Three wins over the Hawks, including a fifth game 132-99 flogging that had a 24-0 spurt in the third and fourth quarters;
- Three more wins over the Bill Fitch-Akeem Olajuwon Houston Rockets, to win the title in Game Six (Bird 29 points, 12 assists, 11 rebounds).

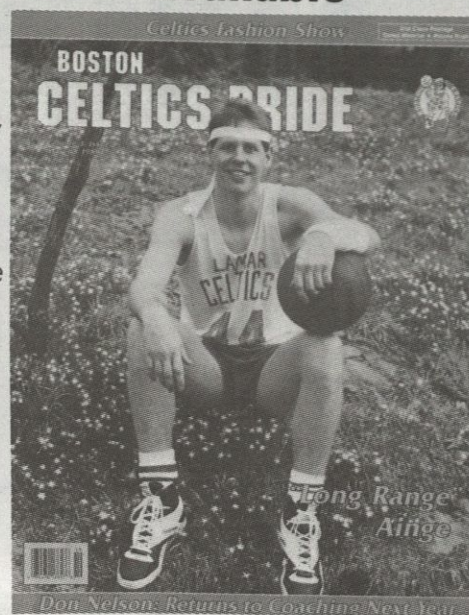
The Celtics' triumph that season was characterized by two critical factors. According to Bird, the starting five had become incredibly tight-knit. The superstar was proud that they could dominate teams from start to finish. K.C. Jones pointed out that he had complete confidence in his bench that year. Walton, Jerry Sichting, Scott Wedman and Greg Kite all played important roles during the regular season and in the playoffs. This latter feature would be missing the following year.

The Celtics' injury woes of last season constitute an all-too-familiar tale. Walton was hurt before the pre-season and Wedman never recovered from heel surgery. This began a landslide—heading into last year's playoffs, every player in the

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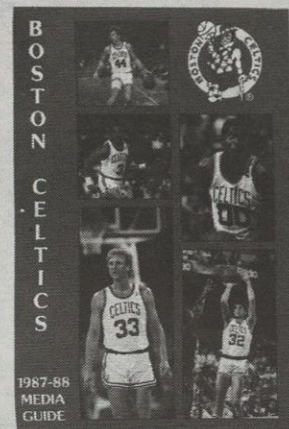


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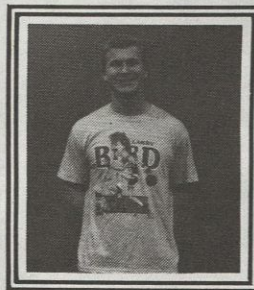


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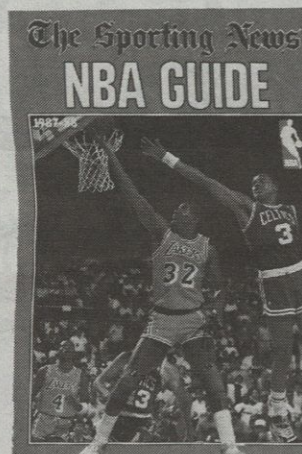


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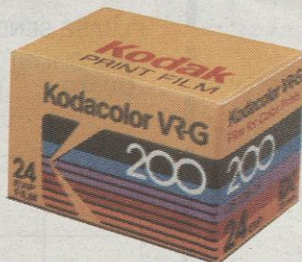


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